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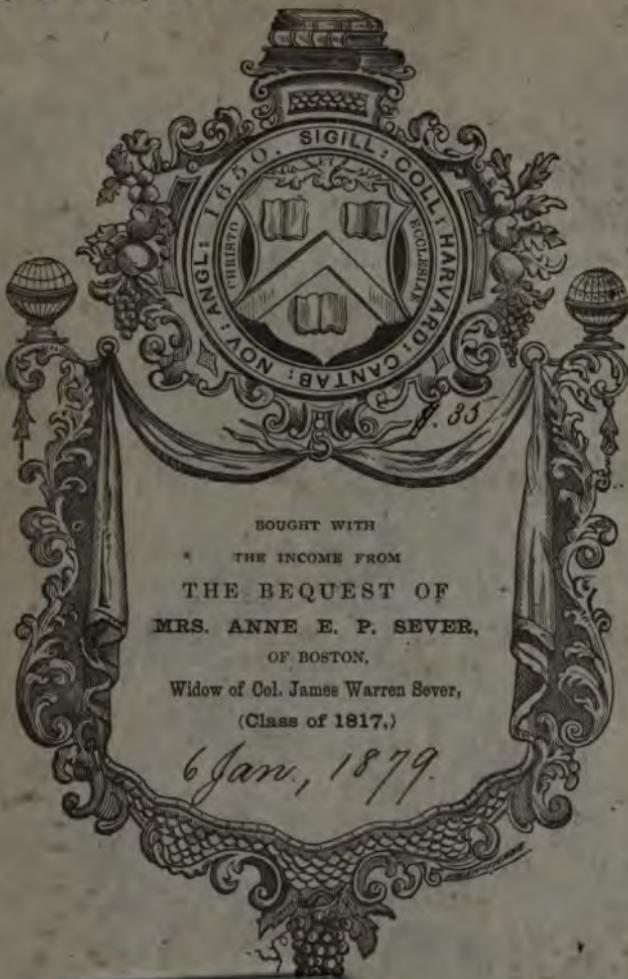
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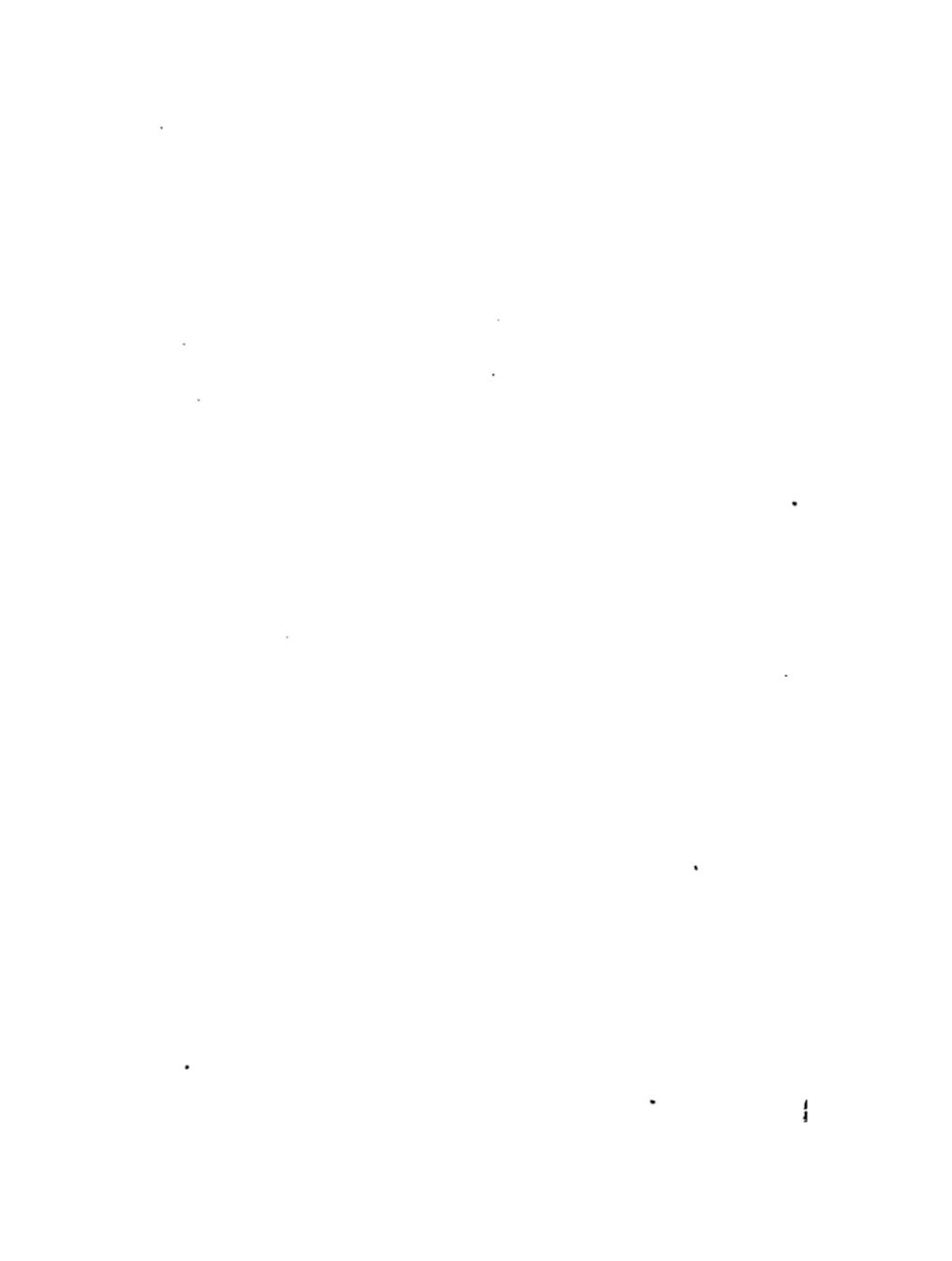
BOUGHT WITH
THE INCOME FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
MRS. ANNE E. P. SEVER,
OF BOSTON.

Widow of Col. James Warren Sever,
(Class of 1817.)

6 Jan., 1879.









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Prompt-Book of
The Fool's Revenge



Edited by

William Winter.

The Prompt-Book.

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The Prompt-Book.

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Edited by William Winter.



Tom Taylor's Tragedy,

of

The Fool's Revenge

As Presented by

Edwin Booth.



*"A twisted, withered, hunchback court buffoon;
A thing to make mirth, and to be made mirth of."*

"Call him a jester? He laughs vitriol."

"Do the knave justice: he's a king of tongue-fence."

*"I cannot bear to see you cry. * * *
Let be: 't were better than to see me laugh."*

*"Vengeance swells out my veins, and lifts my head,
And makes me terrible."*

*"T is the hyenas o'er their prey,—my child
And I stand here and cannot lift a hand."*

*"Vengeance is God's prerogative—not man's;
I have usurped it. Pray, O, pray for me."*



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1878.*

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Evening Journal

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Preface.



THE tragedy of *The Fool's Revenge*—one of the best works of the English dramatist and poet, Tom Taylor—was first acted in 1859, at Sadler's Wells Theatre, in London. Charles Phelps—a tragedian much admired on the English stage, equally as a scholar and an artist—represented Bertuccio. In April, 1864, Edwin Booth brought out this tragedy at Niblo's Theatre, New-York,—then under the management of William Wheatley. His choice of the text, his stage-directions, and certain alterations of the piece, made by him, are seen in the present reprint. An important change, which it is hoped will be thought an improvement, has been made at the end—where, now, Bertuccio dies, while Dell' Aquila, as a matter of poetic justice, is rewarded with the hand of Fiordelisa. An effort has also been made, by re-arrangement of stage business, to sharpen and heighten the effect of the final catastrophe. The Author's Preface will be found on another page. He defines his indebtedness to Victor Hugo's "*Le Roi s'Amuse*," which is slight. The subject of that drama, it will be remembered, is also treated in the opera of "*Rigoletto*." An Appendix to this volume presents a sketch of the Author, remarks on the costume for this piece, thoughts on deformity as an element in art, and the Editor's views of this tragedy. "*The Fool's Revenge*" is to be considered as, almost exclusively, a work of the imagi-



Author's Preface to *The Fool's Revenge.*



THIS drama is in no sense a translation, and ought not, I think, in fairness, to be called even an adaptation of Victor Hugo's fine play, "Le Roi s' Amuse." It originated in a request made to me by one of our most popular actors, to turn the libretto of "Rigoletto" into a play, as he wished to act the part of the jester. On looking at Victor Hugo's drama, with this object, I found so much in it that seemed to me inadmissible on our stage; so much, besides, that was wanting in dramatic motive and cohesion, and — I say it in all humility — so much that was defective in that central secret of stage effect, climax, that I determined to take the situation of the jester and his daughter, and to recast in my own way the incidents in which their story was invested. The death of Galeotto Manfredi at the hands of his wife, Francesca Bentivoglio, is historical. It seemed to me that the atmosphere of a petty Italian court of the Fifteenth Century was well suited, as a medium, for presenting the jester's wrongs, his rooted purpose of revenge, and the miscarriage of that purpose. I should not have thought it necessary to say thus much, had not some of the newspaper critics talked of my work as a simple translation of Victor Hugo's drama, while others described it, more contemptuously, as a mere *rifacimento* of Verdi's libretto. Those who will take the trouble to compare my work with either of its alleged originals will see that my play is neither translation nor *rifacimento*. The motives of Bertuccio, the machinery by which his revenge is diverted from its intended channel, and the action in the court subsequent to the carrying off of his daughter, are my own, and I conceive that these features give me the fullest right to call "The Fool's Revenge" a new play, even if the use of Victor Hugo's "Triboulet" and "Blanche" disentitle it to the epithet original — which is matter of opinion.

For the admirable manner in which the drama is mounted and represented at Sadler's Wells, and for the peculiarly powerful impersonation of Bertuccio, I owe all gratitude to Mr. Phelps. I must extend that *feeling* also to Miss Heath, Miss Atkinson, and the rest of the Sadler's Wells company, engaged in the representation of "The Fool's Revenge."

TOM TAYLOR.

Persons Represented.



GALEOTTO MANFREDI, *Duke of Faenza.*

GUIDO MALATESTA, *an old Military Commander and Nobleman.*

BALDASSARE TORELLI, }
GIAN MARIA ORDELAFFI, } *Noblemen and Courtiers.*

BERNARDO ASCOLTI, *a Florentine Ambassador.*

BERTUCCIO, *a Jester.*

SERAFINO DELL'AQUILA, *a Poet.*

ASCANIO, *a Page to Francesca.*

GINEVRA, *Wife to Malatesta.*

FRANCESCA BENTIVOGLIO, *Wife to Manfredi, and Duchess of Faenza.*

FIORDELISA, *Daughter to Bertuccio.*

BRIGITTA, *Servant to Bertuccio.*

LORDS, LADIES, CHAMBERLAINS, PAGES and ATTENDANTS.

Place and Time.



SCENE.—*Faenza, in Italy.*

PERIOD.—*End of the fifteenth century (1488).*

TIME OF ACTION.—*A little less than forty-eight hours.*

THE FOOL'S REVENGE.



Act First.

FIRST NIGHT.

Scene First. { FAENZA. THE GARDENS OF MANFREDI'S
PALACE. TERRACE AT BACK. GARDEN,
ETC., ILLUMINATED. FESTIVAL MUSIC
AT RISE OF CURTAIN. MOONLIGHT OVER
THE WHOLE SCENE. NOBLES AND
LADIES MOVE THROUGH THE GARDENS.
TORELLI AND ORDELAFFI DISCOVERED.
ENTER, TO THEM, ASCOLTI.

Tor.

Messer Bernardo, you shall judge between us:
Is Ordelaffi's, here, a feasting face?
I say 't is fitter for a funeral.

Asc.

An Ordelaffi scarce can love the feast
That greets Octavian Riario,
Lord of Forlì and Imola.

[*Music ceases.*

Ord.

Because our line were masters there of old,
Till they were fools enough to get pulled down!
I was born to no lordship but my sword.
Thanks to my stout, black bands, I look to win
New titles, and so grieve not over lost ones.

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1879. Jan. 6,

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Asc.

She leaves Faenza ?

Tor.

So they say : to-morrow
 Rides to Bologna, to her grim old father,
 Giovanni Bentivoglio.

Asc.

To complain
 Of her hot-blooded husband ?

Tor.

Nay, I know not :
 Enough, she goes, and—fair dame as she is—
 A murrain go with her, say I. There never
 Was good time in Faenza, since she came
 To spoil sport with her jealousy. Manfredi
 Will be himself again when she is hence.

[*Music pp.*]*Asc.*

Hush ! here she comes — } [*Looking off R. U. E.*
Ord.]

With that misshapen imp,
 Bertuccio. Gibing devil ! I shall thrust
 My dagger down his throat, one of these days !

Tor.

Call him a jester ? he laughs vitriol.

Asc.

Spares nothing ; cracks his random scurrl quips
 Upon my master, great Lorenzo's self.

Ord.

Do the knave justice, he 's a king of tongue-fence ;
 Not a weak joint in all our armours round
 But he knows and can hit. Confound the rogue !
 I 'm blistered still from a word-basting he
Gave me but yesterday. Would we were quits !

Tor.

Wait! I 've a rod in pickle that shall flay
 The tough hide off his hump. A rare revenge!

Asc.

They 're here: avoid!

[*Ascolti, Ordelaffi, and Torelli mingle with the guests, and exeunt L. U. E.—Re-enter Manfredi, and Ginevra, followed by Malatesta C.—They cross and disappear.—Enter Francesca, followed by Bertuccio.*

Fran.

[*Looking off, as if watching, and aside.*

Still with her!
 Changing hot palms and long looks!
 Hers for the dance, hers at the feast, all hers!
 Nothing for me but shallow courtesies,
 And hollow coin of compliment that leaves
 The craving heart as empty as a beggar
 Bemocked with counters!

[*Music, forte, until Bertuccio speaks.*

Ber.

[*Counting on his fingers and looking at the moon.*

Moon—Manfredi—moon!

Fran.

Ha, knave!

Ber.

By your leave, Monna Cesca, I am cyphering.

[*Note.—Monna is diminutive for Madonna, Dame, or Mistress, and Cesca is diminutive for Francesca.*

Fran.

Some fool's sum?

Ber.

Yes ; running your husband's changes
Against the moon's. Manfredi has it hollow.
It comes out ten new loves 'gainst five new moons !

Fran.

Where do I stand ?

Ber.

First of the ten ; your moon was a whole honey one ;
Excluding that, it 's nine loves to four moons.

Fran.

You pity me, Bertuccio ?

Ber.

Not a whit ;
I pity sparrows, but not sparrow-hawks.

Fran.

I read your riddle,—I am strong enough
To right my own wrongs. So I am, while here.

Ber.

Then stay !

Fran.

My father at Bologna looks for me.

Ber.

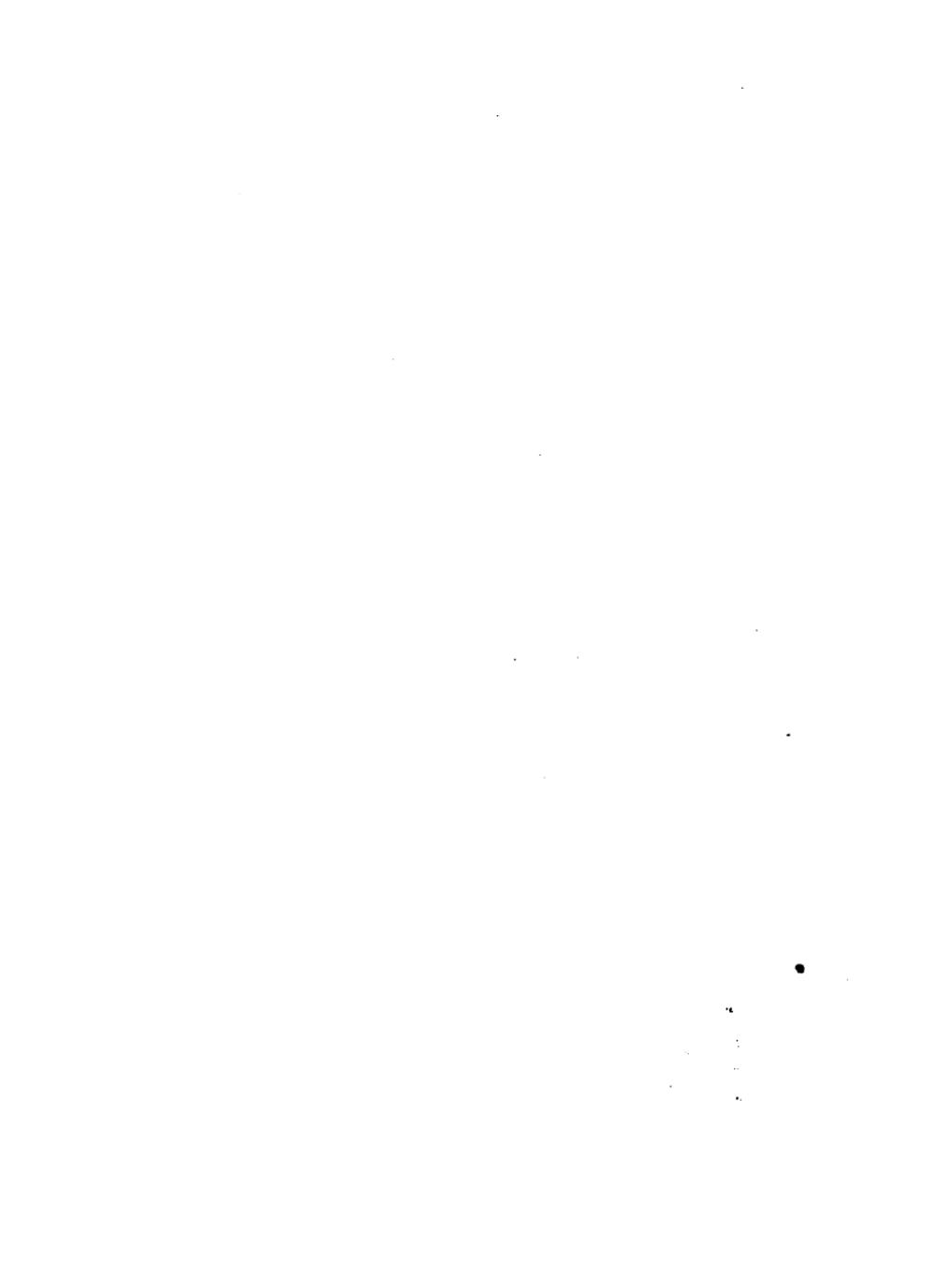
Then go !

Fran.

And leave him here—with her—both free,
And not a friend that I can trust to watch
And give me due report how things go 'twixt them.
Had I one friend—

Ber.

You have Bertuccio.



Fran.

Men call you faithless, bitter, loving wrong
For wrong's sake, Duke Manfredi's worst councillor,
Still prompting him to evil.

Ber.

How folks flatter!

Fran.

How, then, am I to trust you?

Ber.

Monna Cesca,
You know the wild beasts that your husband keeps
Down in the castle fosse? There's a she-leopard
I lie and gaze at by the hour together;
So sleek, so graceful, and so dangerous!
I long to see her let loose on a man.
Trust me to draw the bolt, and loose my leopard.

Fran.

I'll trust your love of mischief, not of me.

Ber.

That's safest!

Fran.

I must know how fares this fancy
Of Duke Manfredi for yon pale Ginevra:
Mark him and her, their meetings, communings;
I know you're private with my lord.

Ber.

He trusts me.

Fran.

[*Giving ring.*

Here! take my ring: your letters sealed with this,
My page Ascanio will bring me straight;
'T is but three hours' hard riding—and in six
I'm here again. Mark! write not on suspicion:

Let evil thought ripen to evil act ;
 That in the full flush of their guilty joys
 I may strike sudden and strike home.
 No Bentivoglio pardons !

Ber.

Have a care !
 Faenza is Manfredi's. These court-flies,
 Who flutter in the sunshine of his favour,
 Have stings : the pudding-headed citizens
 Love his free ways : he leaves their wives alone :
 You play your own head, touching his.

Fran.

Give me my vengeance : then come what come may.

[*Music p.*

Enough ; I am resolved. Now for the dance !
 They shall not see a cloud upon my brow,
 Though my heart ache and burn. I can smile too,
 On him and her. Bertuccio, remember !

[*Exit Francesca L. U. E.*

Ber. [*Looking at the ring.*

A blood-stone—apt reminder ! Does she think
 That none but she has wrongs ? That none but she
 Means to revenge them ? What ? “ No Bentivoglio
 Pardons.” There is a certain vile Bertuccio,
 A twisted, withered, hunchbacked, court buffoon,
 A thing to make mirth, and to be made mirth of,
 A something betwixt ape and man, that claims
 To run in couples with your ladyship.
 You hunt Manfredi, I hunt Malatesta :
 Let 's try which of the two has sharper fangs.

[*Manfredi and Ginevra re-appear in the back-ground c., still followed by Malatesta.*

The duke and Malatesta's wife ! [*Retires.*

[*Manfredi and Ginevra come forward, Malatesta watching them.*

Man.

Not yet! but one more round! The feast is blank
 For me when you are gone. The flowers lack perfume,
 Missing your fragrant breath. The music sounds
 Harsh and untunable, when your sweet voice
 Makes no more under-melody. O, stay! [Music ceases.

Gin.

I am summoned, sir; my husband waits for me.

Man.

[*Aside.*

What spoil-sports are these husbands
 And these wives!
 Per Bacco! I could wish Count Malatesta
 Would lend my duchess escort to Bologna,
 So we were both well rid. [Malatesta beckons to Ginevra.

Gin.

Your pardon, sir,
 My husband beckons. It is I, not you,
 Must bear his moods to-night. I dare not stay.

Man.

I would not bring a cloud to your fair brow
 For all Faenza. Fare you well, sweet lady!
 [He leads her to Malatesta.

I render up your jewel, Malatesta;
 See that you guard it as befits its price.

Mal.

Trust me for that, my lord.

Man.

[*To Ginevra.*

Sweet dreams wait on you.

Mal.

[*Aside.*

This night sees her safe past Faenza's walls.

[*Exeunt Malatesta and Ginevra R. I. E.*



Man.
A peerless lady !

[*Sits R.*

Ber.

[*Comes forward, and crouches at Manfredi's feet.*
And a churlish spouse !

Man.

Bertuccio !

Ber.

"At your elbow, sir," quoth Satanus.

Man.

Come, fool, let 's rail at husbands.

Ber.

Shall I call
Your wife to help us ?

Man.

Out on thee, screech-owl !

[*Kicks Bertuccio out of his way, rises, and crosses
to L.*

Just when I felt my chains about to fall
Thou mind'st me of my jailer. Thank the saints,
I shall be free to-morrow, for a while.
I 'm thirsty to employ my liberty.
Come, my familiar, help me to some mischief;
Some pleasant deviltry, with just the spice
Of sin to make the enjoyment exquisite.

Ber.

Let 's see ; throat-cutting 's pleasant, but that 's stale ;
Plotting has savour in it, but 't is too tedious :
Say, a campaign with Ordelaffi's band,
So you may feed all the seven sins at once.

Man.

Out, barren hound ! thy wits are growing dull.

[*Strikes Bertuccio.*



Ber.

A man can't always be finding out new sins ;
 Think, they 're as hard to hit on as new pleasures.
 My head on 't, Alexander had not run
 So wide a round of pleasures as you of sins ;
 And yet he offered kingdoms for a new one.
 You must invoke Asmodeus, not Beelzebub.

Man.

What 's he ?

Ber.

The devil specially charged with love ;
 He has more work than all the infernal legion.
 There 's Malatesta's wife ; she 's young, and fair,
 And good, they say ; rare matter for sin there,
 Though 't is the oldest of them all.

Man.

But show me
 How to win her ! She 's cold as she is fair.
 I have spent enough sweet speech to have softened stone,
 And all in vain.

Ber.

The monks say Hannibal
 Melted the rocks with vinegar, not sugar.

Man.

But she is adamant.

Ber.

When all else fails
 You 've still force to fall back on. Carry her off,
 From under Guido's grizzled beard.

Man.

By Bacchus,
 There 's mettle in thy counsel, knave ! I 'll think on 't.
 [Crosses to R. and sits.

Ber.

It needs no brains, neither; only strong hands
And hard hearts. Here come both.

[Enter *Torelli, Ascoli, and Ordelaffi* L. U. E.

Man.

What say you, gentlemen: may I trust your arms?

Tor.

They 're yours in any quarrel.

Asc.

So are mine!

Ord.

And mine!

Ber.

One at a time. You said "arms;"—of *Torelli*
You should ask legs; his did such famous service
In carrying him out of danger at Sarzana,
I think they may be trusted. [All laugh, except *Torelli*.

Tor.

Scurril knave;
But I 'll be even with thee.

Ber.

That were pity.
A hump would be a sore disfigurement
Upon a back that you 're so fond of showing!

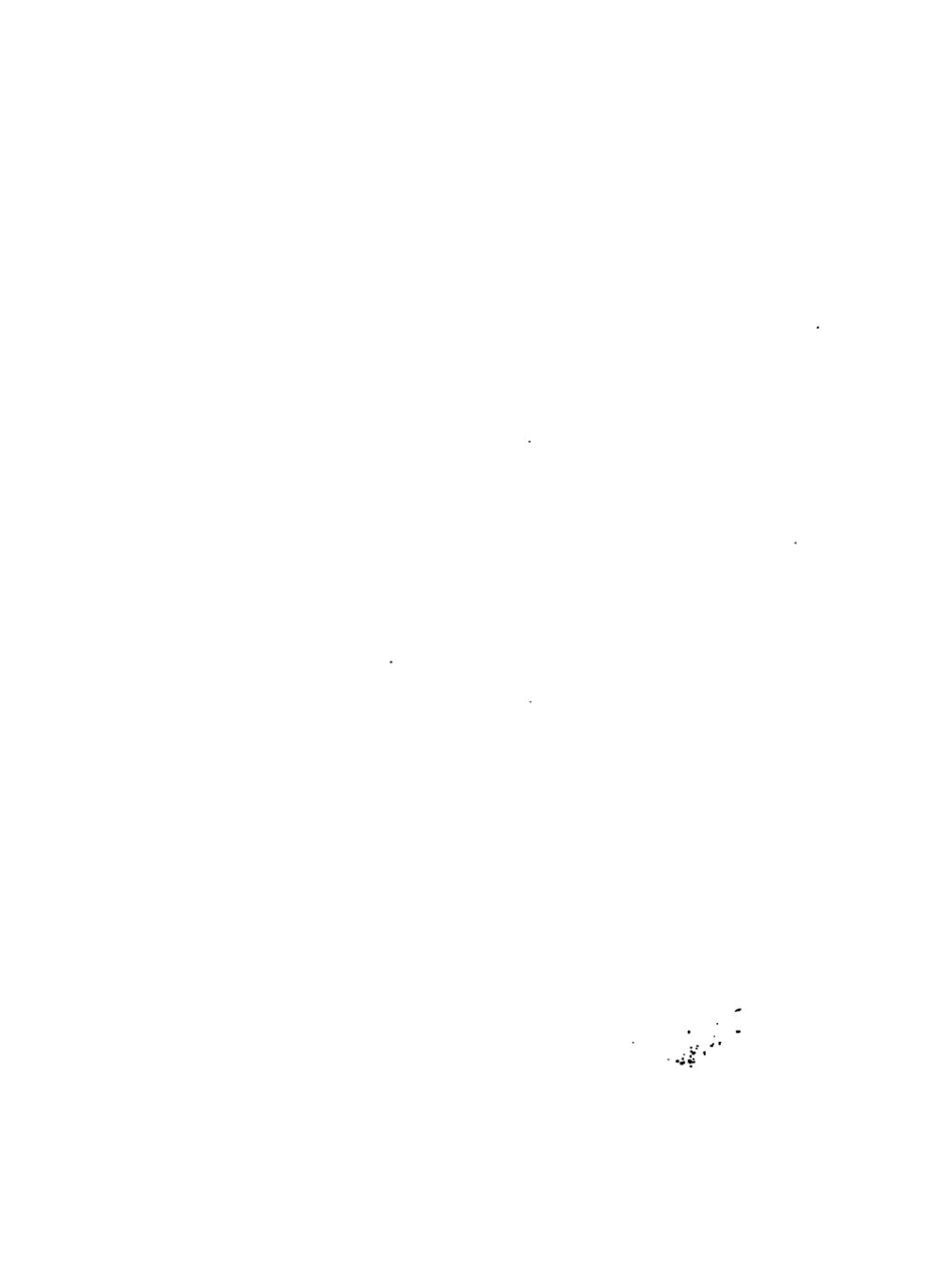
Asc.

This rogue needs gagging.

Ber.

What, for speaking truth?
I cry you mercy, I forgot how ugly
It must sound to a Florentine Ambassador.

[All laugh except *Ascoli*]



Man.

Well thrust, Bertuccio !

Ord.

My lord, my lord !

The slave is paid to find us wit —

Ber.

Hold there.

No man is bound to impossibilities,
'T is a known maxim of the Roman law ;
How then can I find wit for Ordelaffi ?

But look, there 's Serafino, big with a sonnet :

[Dell' Aquila passes across the terrace c. and disappears.

I must help him to reason for his rhymes — [Going c.

Man.

Stay !

*Ber.*Not I ! You 're for finding out new sins ;
With three such councillors, I am superfluous.

The evil seed is sown ; 't will grow, 't will grow. [Aside.

*[Exit Bertuccio c.**Tor.*

Toad !

Asc.

Foul-mouthed scoffer !

Ord.

Warped in wit and limb !

Asc.

My lord, you give your monkey too much rope.

*Man.*Nay, give the devil his due ; if he hits hard,
He hits impartially. I take my share
Of buffets with the rest. Best cure the smart

By laughing at your neighbour that smarts worse.
But, about this business, where your arms may help me.

Asc.

Is it an enemy to be silenced?

Ord.

A castle
To be surprised? A merchant to be squeezed?

Asc

Or aught in which ducats or brains of Florence
Can help?

Man.

No. Who was queen of the feast to-night?
In your skilled judgment, Messer Gian Maria?

Ord.

I ought to say your duchess, fair Francesca;
But, if another tongue had asked the question——

Man.

Speak out thy honest judgment!

Ord.

Not a lady
In all Faenza's worthy to compare
With proud Ginevra Malatesta!

Tor.

I think I know a fairer,—but no matter!

Man.

I hold with Ordelaffi. I have mounted
Ginevra's colours in my cap, and heart;
But she's too proud, or fearful of old Guido,
To smile upon my suit. 'T is the first time
I've found so coy a dame.



Asc.

Trust one who knows them,
The coyondest are not always chaste.

Man.

How say you, if I spared her shame of yielding
By a night escalade ?

Ord.

[*Shaking his head.*]

Carry her off ?

A Malatesta ! Were it an enemy's town ——

Man.

Hear him ! how modestly he talks ! Why, man,
Since when shrank'st thou from climbing balconies,
And forcing doors without an invitation ?

Ord.

O, citizens', I grant you ; but a noble's,
One of ourselves ——

Asc.

Remember, Malatesta
Is cousin to the old lord of Ceséna :
The affair might breed a feud, and so let in
The sly Venetian.

Tor.

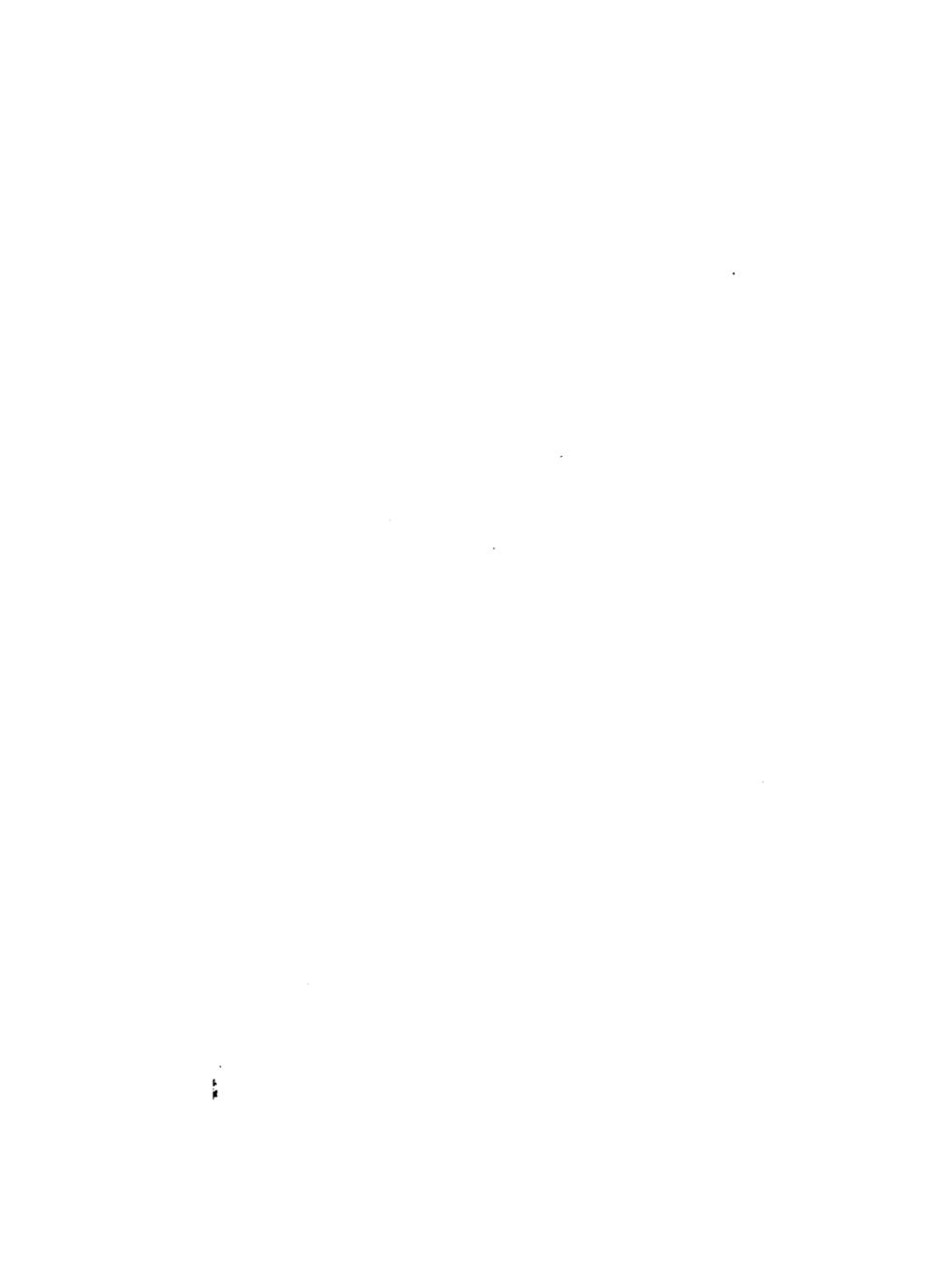
Be advised, my lord ;
If you must breathe your new-fledged liberty,
Try safer game. Old Malatesta's horns
Might prove too sharp for pastime.

Man.

Out, you faint hearts,
Do you fall off ? Then, by Saint Francis' bones,
I and Bertuccio will adventure it.

Tor.

Bertuccio ! My jewel to his hump,
'T was he put this mad frolic in your head.



Man.

And if it were ? At least he 'll stand by me.
Perchance his wits may be worth all your brawn.

Asc.

Here comes one who may claim to be consulted
Upon this business. [Enter *Malatesta* R. I. E.

Man.

Guido Malatesta !

Why, how now, count ? You left our feast so soon,
I thought you i' the sheets this good half hour.

Mal.

I had forgot my duty to your lordship ;
So now repair my lack of courtesy :
To-morrow I purpose riding to Ceséna,
And would not go without due leave-taking.

Man.

[*Aside.*

This jumps well with my project.

What, to-morrow !

[*To Malatesta.*

You ride alone ?

Mal.

No, with my wife.

Man.

The devil !

[*Aside.*

Why this is sudden ; she spoke no word of this

[*To Malatesta.*

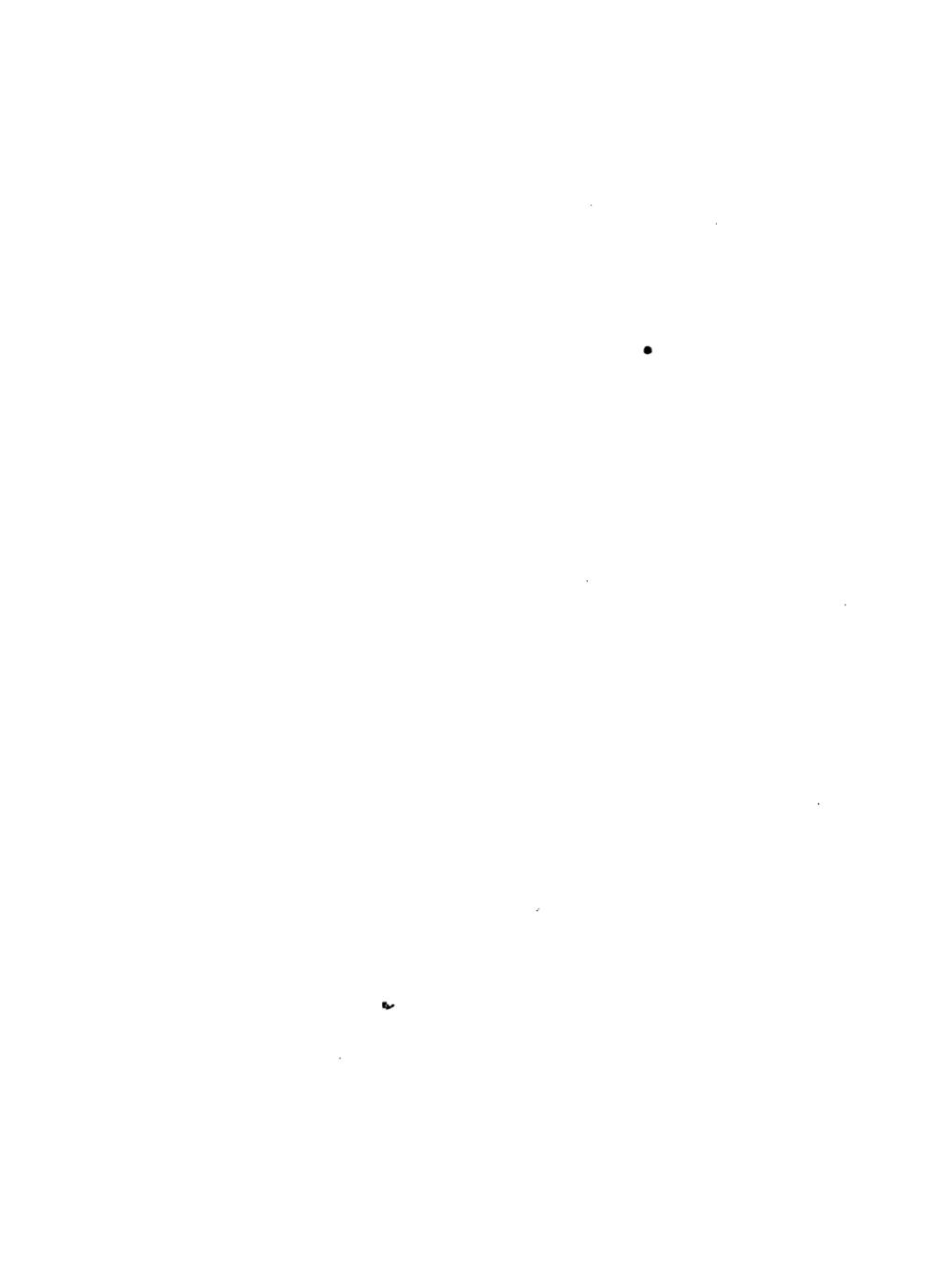
To-night.

Mal.

Tush ! women know not their own minds ;
How should they know their husbands' ?

Man.

But your reason ?



Mal.

Your air here in Faenza is too warm,
 And scarce so pure as fits my wife's complexion ;
 She 'll be better in my castle at Ceséna ;
 The walls are five feet thick, and from the platform
 There 's a rare view. She 'll need no exercise.

Man.

The jailer !
 But what says the lady's will ?

[*Aside.*]
 [To Malatesta.]

Mal.

I never ask that ; and so 'scape all risk
 Of finding it run counter to my own.

Man.

Faenza will have great miss of you both.

Mal.

O, fear not, I 'll return ; your wine 's too good
 To be left lightly. I 'll be back to-morrow,
 Before the gates are shut. Meanwhile accept
 This leave-taking by proxy from my wife.

Man.

Not so ; I must exchange farewell with her
 To-morrow.

Mal.

We shall start an hour ere dawn ;
 You 'll scarce be stirring.

Man.

Plague upon the churl !
 He meets me at all points. At least, I hope,
 This absence of your wife will not be long ;
 My duchess cannot spare her.

Saints forgive me !

[*Aside.*]

Aside.

Mal.

When your fair lady wants her, she can send :
I 'll answer for her coming on that summons.

Good-night, sweet lords.

How crest-fallen he looks !

[*Aside.*

Mass ! 't is ill cozening an old campaigner !

Did he think I had forgot to guard my baggage ?

|*Exit Malatesta.*

Man.

A murrain go with him ! May the horse stumble
That carries him, and break his old bull-neck !

O, this is cruel ; with my hand stretched out

To have to draw 't back empty. I could curse !

Tor.

What if I helped you to a substitute

For coy Ginevra ? passing her in beauty :

One, too, whose conquest puts no crown to risk,

And helps withal a notable requital

That we all owe Bertuccio, you included.

Man.

What mean you ?

Tor.

Guess what 's happened to Bertuccio.

Ord.

He 's grown good-natured.

Asc.

Or has dropped his hump.

Man.

He has found a monkey uglier than himself.

Tor.

No, something stranger than all these would be,
If they had happened. He has found a mistress !

|*All laugh.*

Man.

My lady's pet baboon ? Bertuccio
Graced with a mistress ! *[He laughs.]*

Asc.

She is blind, of course ?

Ord.

And has a hump, I hope, to match his own ?

Man.

Bertuccio with a mistress ! why the rogue
Ne'er yet made joke so monstrous, or so pleasant.

[All laugh.]

Tor.

Laugh as you please, sirs ; on my knightly faith,
He has a mistress, and a rare one too.
Nay, if you doubt my word — here comes Dell' Aquila,
He knows as well as I.

Man.

We 'll question him.

[Enter Serafino Dell' Aquila c.]

Man.

Good even to my poet — you walk late !

Aqu. *[Pointing to the moon.]*

I tend my mistress : poets and lunatics,
You know, are her liege subjects.

Man.

They are happy.

Aqu.

Why ?

Man.

They have a new mistress every month.
But jesters can find mistresses, it seems,
As well as poets. There 's Torelli swears
Bertuccio has one, and that you know it.

Aqu.

I know he has a rare maid, close mewed up,
But whether wife or daughter —

Man.

Tell not me!
A mistress for a thousand! But what of her?
How did you find her out?

Aqu.

'T was some weeks since,
Attending vespers in your house's chapel,
At San Costanza, I beheld a maiden
Kneeling before that picture of our lady,
By Fra Filippo:—O, so fair, so rapt
In her pure passionate prayers!—I tell you, sirs,
I was nigh going on my knees beside her,
And asking for an interest in her orisons:
Such eyes! and such a brow—crowned with such wreaths
Of glossy hair! and then, her cheeks of snow,
Flushed tenderly, as when the sunlight strikes
Upon an evening Alp! and over all,
A grace of maiden modesty that lay
More still and snowy round her than the folds
Of her white veil! And when she rose I rose
And followed her, like one drawn by a charm,
To a mean house, where entering, she was lost.

Man.

She was alone?

Aqu.

Only a shrewish servant
That saw her to the church, and saw her home.

Man.

A most weak wolf-dog for so choice a lamb!

Aqu.

Methought, my lord, she needed no more guard
Than the innocence that sat, dove-like, in her eyes,

That shaped the folding of her delicate hands,
And timed the movement of her gentle feet.

Man.

You spoke to her ?

Aqu.

I dared not ; some strange shame
Put weight upon my tongue. I only watched her,
And sometimes heard her speak. That was enough.

Man.

Poets are easy satisfied. Well, you watched ?

Aqu.

And then I found that I was not alone
Upon my nightly post : there were two more ;
One stayed outside, like me, and one went in.

Tor.

True to the letter ! I was the outsider,
The third, and luckiest, was Bertuccio !

Man.

The hump-backed hypocrite !

Ord.

The owl that screeched
The loudest against women !

Asc.

But, is 't certain
That 't was Bertuccio ?

Tor.

I can swear to that.

Aqu.

And I.

Asc.

How did you know him ?



Tor.

By his hump,
His gait; who could mistake that crab-like walk?
I could have knocked my head against the wall
To think I had been fool enough to trust
A woman's looks for once. Dell'Aquila,
I know, holds other faith about the sex.

Aqu.

I would stake life upon her purity;
Yet, 't is past doubt Bertuccio is the man,
The ugly jailer of this prisoned bird.

Man.

Why that 's enough to make it a mere duty
To break her prison-house, and shift her keeping
To fitter hands,—say mine. I 'm lord of the town;
None else has right of prison here but I.

Aqu.

What would you do?

Man.

First see if she bears out
Your picture, Serafino; if she do,
Be sure I will not wait outside to mark
Her shadow. Shadows may suit poets;
I want substance.

Tor.

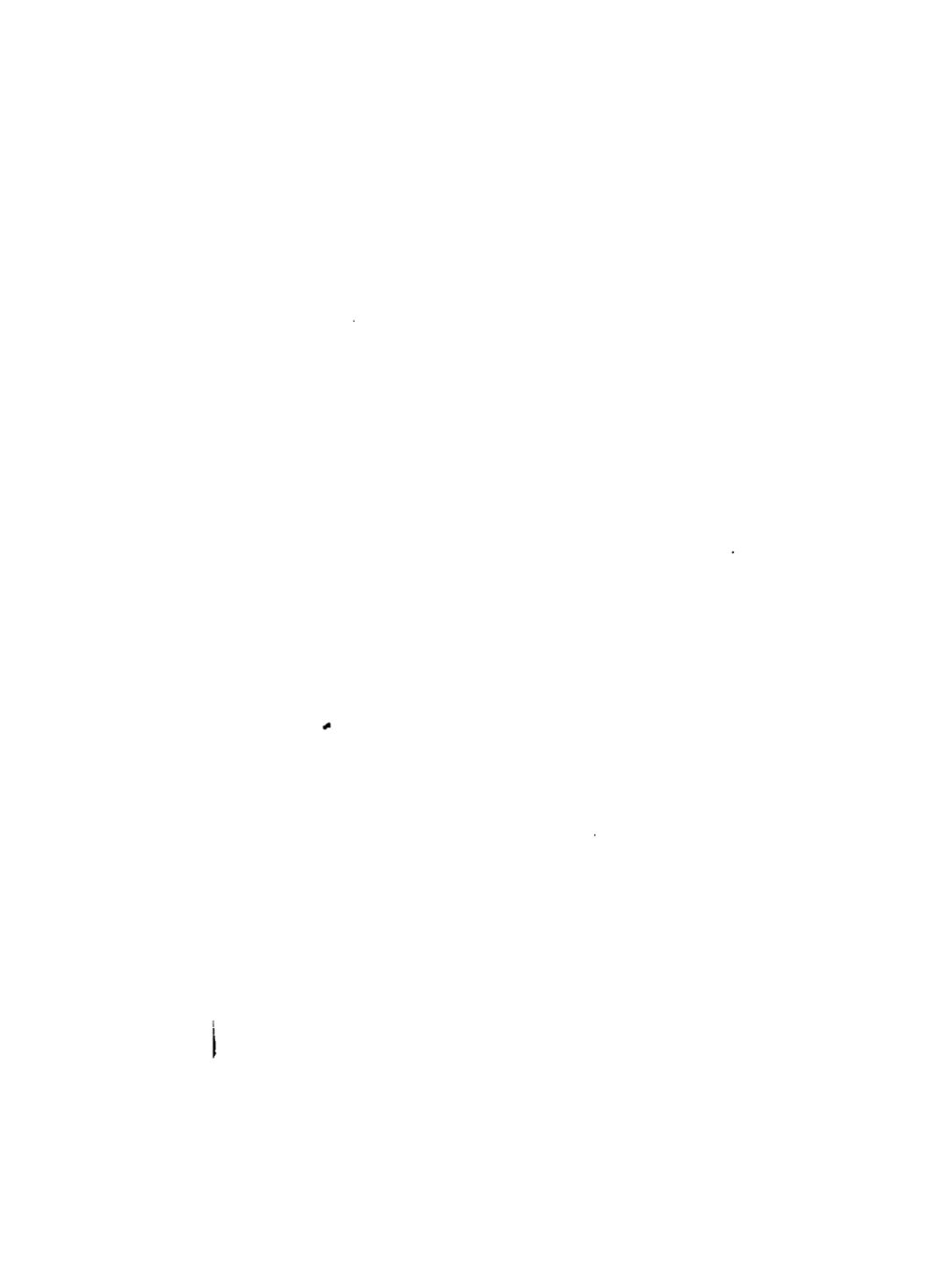
She is for Bertuccio's master,
Not for Bertuccio. When shall it be?

Man.

To-morrow
I 'm a free man! Meet me at midnight, here.

Aqu.

You would not harm her? Only see her face,
You will not have the heart to do her wrong.



Man.

What call you "wrong"? To save so choice a creature
 From such a guardian as Bertuccio?
 He would have prompted me to play the robber
 Of Malatesta's pearl: let him guard his own.

[*Aquila goes up stage.*

Ord.

If he resists, we 'll knock him o'er the sconce;
 Let me have that part of the business.

Man.

Nay, I 'd not have the rascal harmed; he 's bitter,
 But shrewedly witty, and he makes me laugh.
 No, spare me my buffoon: who does him harm,
 Shall answer it to me.

Tor.

'T were a rare plot to make the knave believe
 Our scheme still held against old Malatesta:
 That his Ginevra was the game we followed.

Ord.

So give him a rendezvous a mile away;
 And, while he waits our coming, to break open
 The mew where he keeps close his tercel gentle.

Asc. [Aside to *Manfredi.*

Ne'er trust a poet. What if he betray us?

Man.

He 's truth itself; and where he gives his faith,
 'T is better than a bond of your Lorenzo's.

Asc.

Swear him to secrecy.

Man.

[*To Dell' Aquila, who advances.*

Your hand upon it.

You 'll not spoil our sport, by breaking to Bertuccio
What we intend ?

Aqu.

But think, O, think, my lord,
What if this were no mistress ; as, if looks
Have privilege to reveal the soul, she is none ?

Man.

Mistress, or maid, man, I will not be baulked ;
'T is for her good. I know the sex ; she pines
In her captivity : I 'll find a cage
More fitting such a bird as you 've described.
Your hand on 't : not a whisper to Bertuccio !

Aqu.

You force me. There 's my hand : I will not speak
A word to him.

Man.

[*Taking his hand.*

That 's like a trusty liegeman
Of blind Lord Cupid.

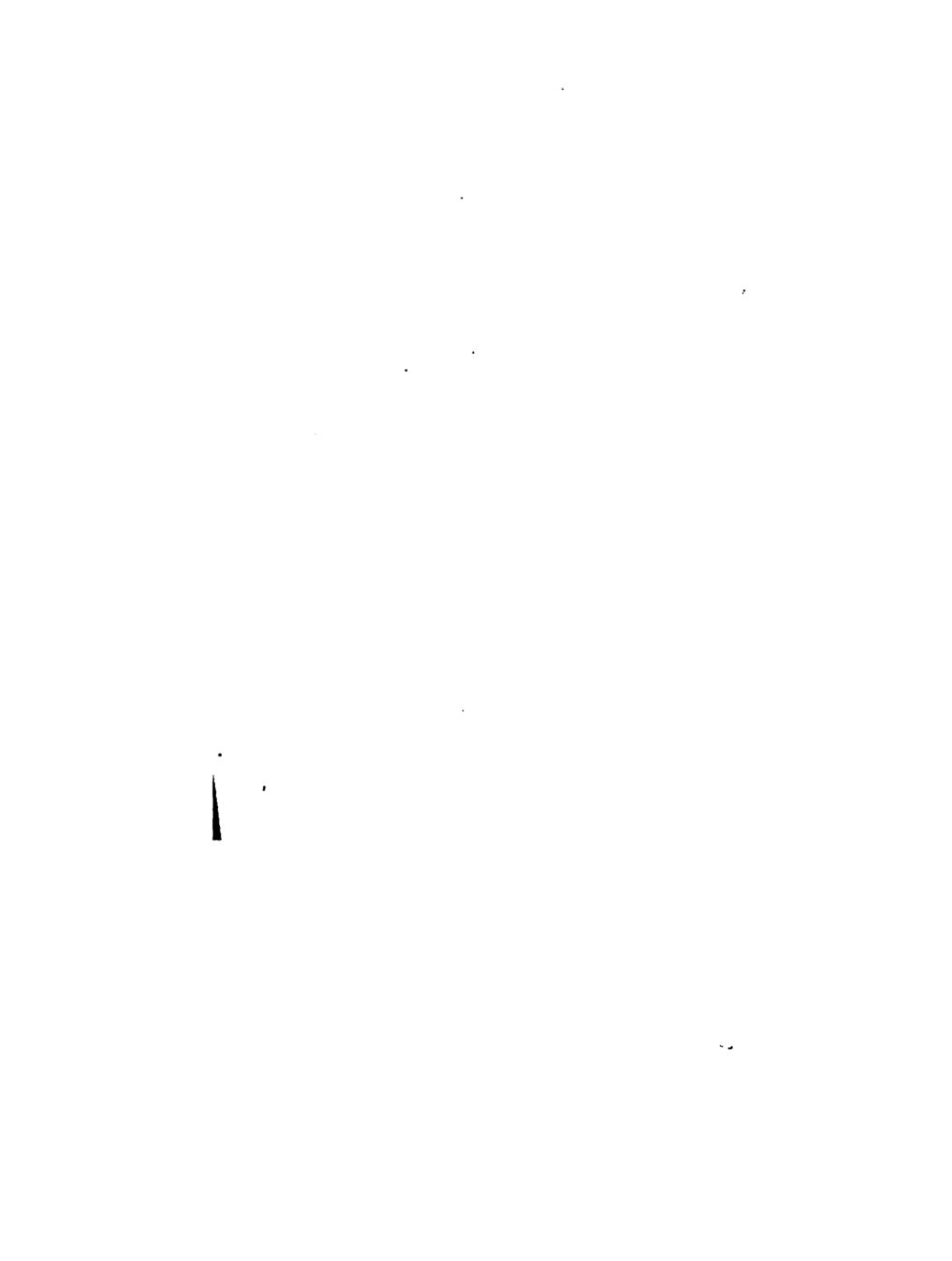
Hark, a word with you ! [*To the others.* *They retire c.*

Aqu.

[*Aside.*

I 'll save her from this wrong, or lose myself.
What tie there is betwixt these two I know not ;
How one so fair and seeming gentle 's linked
With one so foul and bitter,— a buffoon,
Who makes his vile vocation viler still,
By prompting to the evil that he mocks.
But I will 'gage my life that she is pure.
And still shall be so, if my aid avail !

\Exit L. L. E.



Man.

[*Advancing with his companions.*

But how to get sight of Bertuccio's jewel ?
I 'd see before I 'd seize.

Tor.

Trust me for that !
I am no poet. When I found the damsel
Admitted such a gallant as Bertuccio,
I thought it time to press my suit ; and so
Accosted her on her way from San Costanza ——

Man.

She listened ?

Tor.

Long enough—the little fool—
To learn my meaning ; then she flushed, and fled ;
I followed, when, as the foul fiend would have it,
Ginevra Malatesta, coming by
From vespers with her train, sheltered the pigeon,
And spoiled my chase.

Man.

You did not give it up ?

Tor.

I changed my plan ; the mistress being coy,
I spread my net to catch the maid. O, lord !
The veriest Gorgon ! You might swear none e'er
Had given her chase before ! no coyness there ;
A small expense of oaths and coin sufficed
To make her think herself a misprized Venus,
And me the most discriminating wooer
In all Faenza. 'T will not need much art
For me to win an entrance to the house ;
And when I 'm in, it shall go hard, my lord,
But I 'll find means to get you access too.

Man.

About it straight; at dusk to-morrow night
Be here, armed, masked and cloaked.

Ord.

While poor Bertuccio
Awaits our coming near San Stefano !
A stone's throw from the casa Malatesta.

Asc.

He 's here !

[Enter Bertuccio, c.—Manfredi in the centre,
Ascoli at his left, Torelli at his right; Ordelaffi
R. corner.

Ber.

Not yet a-bed !
Since when were the fiend's eggs so hard to hatch ?
I left a pleasant little germ of sin
Some half an hour since: it should be full-grown
By this time. Is it ?

Man.

Winged, and hoofed, and tailed.
If proud Ginevra Malatesta sleep
To-morrow night beneath old Guido's roof,
Then call me a snow-water-blooded shaveling.

Ber.

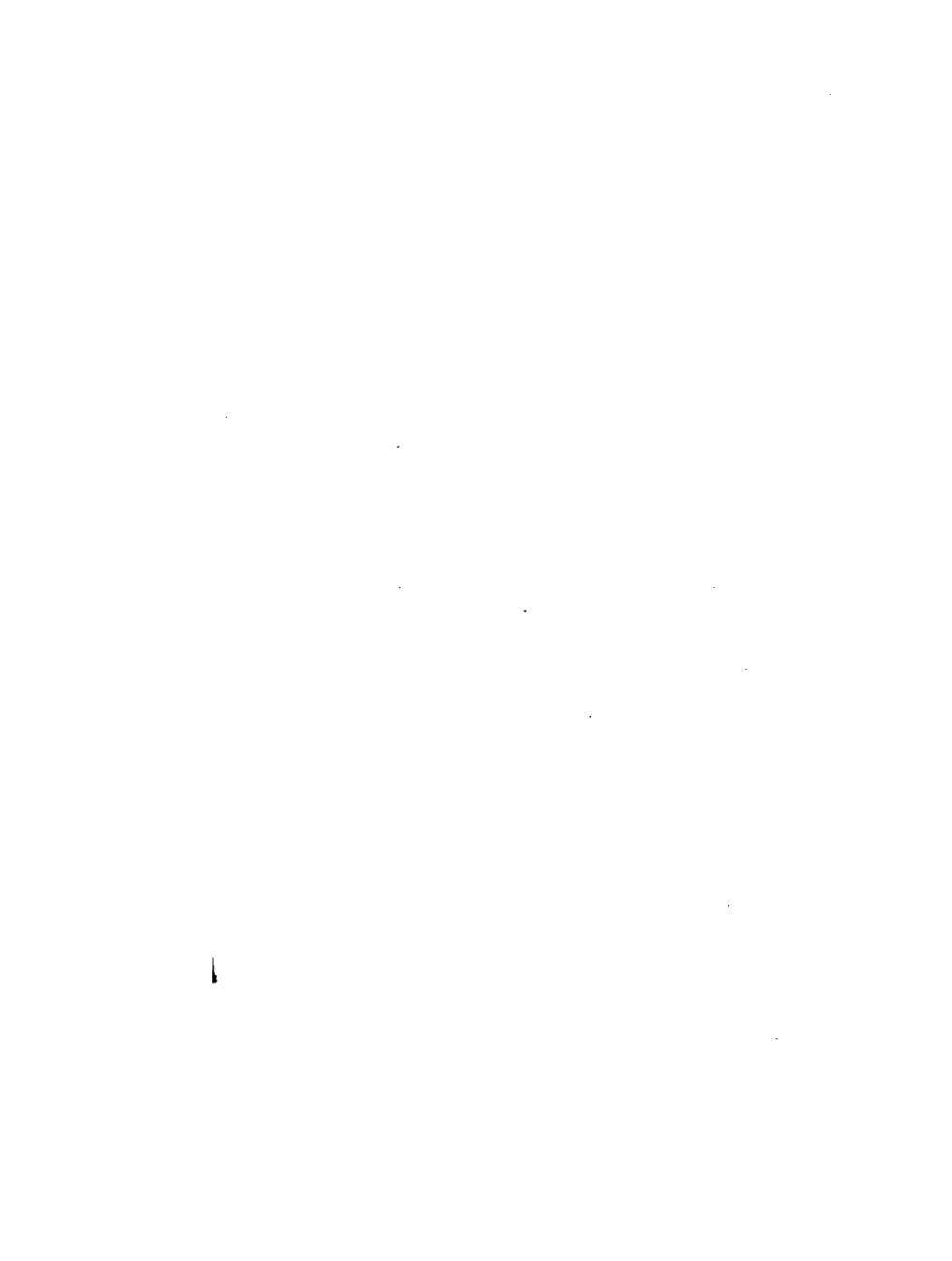
Ha ! 'T is resolved, then ?

Tor.

We have pledged our faith
To carry off the fairest in Faenza —

Asc.

Before the stroke of midnight.



Ord.

'T was my plan
 To gather one by one to the place of action;
 Lest, going in a troop, we might awake
 Suspicion, and put Guido on his guard.

Ber.

A wise precaution, although it was yours.
 I wronged you, gentlemen; I thought you shrunk
 Even from sin, when there was danger in 't.
 It seems there are deeds black enough to make
 Even Torelli brave, Ascolti prompt,
 And Ordelaffi witty. But the place?

Man.

Beside San Stefano.

Ber.

The hour of meeting?

Man.

Half an hour after vespers. There await us.
 And now, good rest my lords; the night wanes fast,
 My duchess will be weary. *[All laugh.]*

All.

Sir, good-night! *[Going.—Exit Manfredi c.*

Ber.

Sleep well, Torelli. Dream of charging home
 In the van of some fierce fight.

Tor.

My common dream. *[Crosses to L.*

Ber.

'T is natural; dreams go by contraries.
 And you, Ascolti, dream of telling truth;
 And, Ordelaffi, that you have grown wise.

Tor.

And you, that your back 's straight, your legs a match.

Asc.

And your tongue tipped with honey.

Ord.

Come, my lords,
Leave him to spit his venom at the moon,
As they say toads do !

[*Crosses to L.*

[*Exeunt all but Bertuccio, laughing, L. 1. E.*

Ber.

Take my curse among you,
Fair, false, big, brainless, outside shows of men !
For once your gibes and jeers fall pointless from me.
My great revenge is nigh, and drowns all sense :
Vengeance swells out my veins, and lifts my head,
And makes me terrible ! Come, sweet to-morrow,
And put my enemy's heart into my hand,
That I may gnaw it !

CURTAIN.



Act Second.

SECOND NIGHT.

Scene First. { FAENZA. A ROOM IN BERTUCCIO'S HOUSE.
THE WALLS ARE HUNG WITH TAPESTRY,
WHICH CONCEALS A SMALL RECESS AND
ALSO A SECRET DOOR COMMUNICATING
WITH A PRIVATE STAIR-WAY. A WIN-
DOW, OPENING ON THE STREET, WITH A
BALCONY. A LUTE AND FLOWERS ON
TABLE. A LAMP, LIGHTED. BELL
STRIKES THE QUARTER. TORELLI AND
BRIGITTA DISCOVERED.

Bri.

Hark, there 's the quarter! you must hence, fair signor.

Tor.

But a few moments more of your sweet presence ?

Bri.

Saint Ursula, she knows, 't is not my will
That drives you hence; but if my master found
That I received a man into the house,
'T were pity of my place, if not my life.

Tor.

Your master is a churl, that would condemn
These maiden blooms to wither on the tree.

Bri.

Churl you may call him! why he 'd have the house
A prison. If you heard the coil he keeps
Of bolts, and bars, and locks! Lord knows the twitter

I 've been in all to-day, about the key
 I lost this morning ; it unlocks the door
 Of yonder stair that leads down to the street.

Tor.

'T was lucky I came by just when you dropt it.

Bri.

Dropt ! nay, signor, 't was whipped off by some cut-purse,
 That thought to filch my coin.

Tor.

That 's a shrewd guess !
 He must have flung it from him where I found it,
 Not knowing of what jewel it unlocked
 The casket !

Bri.

How can I pay your pains that brought it back !

Tor.

By ever and anon giving me leave
 To come and sun myself in your chaste presence.

Bri.

Alas, sweet signor !

Tor.

O ! divine Brigitta !

Bri.

But, I must say farewell. Vespers are over ;
 My mistress will be waiting, she 's so fearful.

Tor.

As if her unripe beauties were in danger,
 While your maturer loveliness can walk
 The streets unguarded.

Bri.

Nay, I 'm a poor, fond, thing ! Lord knows the risk
 I run to let you in.

Tor.

I warrant now

You 've some snug nook where, if your master came,
You could bestow me at a pinch.*Bri.*

I know none,

Unless 't were here, behind the arras; look!

[*Lifting arras from the recess.*Here 's a hole too, whence you could peep to see
When the coast 's clear!*Tor.*There 's room enough for two.
Brigitta![*Aside.**Bri.*

Signor!

*Tor.*How if this had served
For hiding others, before me?*Bri.*

I swear

By the eleven thousand virgins——

Tor.

That 's

Too many by ten thousand and nine hundred
And ninety-nine! Vouch but your virgin self,
And I am satisfied!*Bri.*

Alack, a-day!

To be suspected after all these years.

*Tor.*Pardon a lover's jealousy; this kiss
Shall wipe away the memory of my wrong.
What will not loyalty drive a man to?
There![*Aside.*[*Kisses her.*

*Bri.**[Aside.]*

He has the sweetest lips ! And now begone,
Sweet signor, if you love me.

*Tor.**"If,"*

Brigitta !
Banish me then to outer darkness straight !
Farewell, my full-blown rose ! let others prize
The opening bud ; the ripe, rich flower for me !

Bri.

O, the saints, how he talks ! This way, sweet signor.
[*Taking a key from her girdle.*
The secret door ; the key you found and brought me
Unlocks it. [*Unlocking secret door, in recess.*]

Tor.

[*Taking another from his girdle — aside.*
Else, why did I filch it from you,
And have this, its twin brother, forged to-day ?

*Bri.**[Taking the lamp.*

I 'll light you out, and lock the door behind you.
"Safe bind, safe find."

Tor.

Good-night, sweet piece of woman,
I leave my heart in pledge.
Now for the duke.

[Aside.]

[*Brigitta holds open the door.—Exit Torelli.—
She lights him down and then closes and locks
the door.*

Bri.

He 's gone, bless his sweet face ! To think what risks
Men will run that are lovers, and indeed
Weak women, too ! Lord ! if my master knew.
'T is lucky San Costanza is hard by,
I should be fearful else. Faenza 's full

Of gallants, and who knows what might befall
 A poor young woman like myself, with nought
 Except her innocence to be her safeguard ! [Exit R. i. E.

[As soon as she has closed the door Torelli re-
 enters, with Manfredi, from recess.

Tor.

This way, my lord : the dragon has departed.

Man.

'T is time ; I was aweary of my watch.

Tor.

You were alone, at least. Think of my lot,
 That had to make love to a tough old spinster.
 I would we had changed parts. Why, good my lord
 I had to kiss her. Faugh ! when shall I get
 The garlic from my beard ? But here 's the cage
 That holds our bird. We must ensconce ourselves,
 For they 'll be here anon ; vespers were over
 Before we entered.

Man.

Thanks to your device
 Of the forged key. Yet that was scarcely needed ;
 I 've climbed more break-neck balconies than that

Without a silken ladder. So, a lute, [Looking around.
 A missal, flowers ! more tokens of a maid
 Than of a mistress. Well, so much the better ;
 I long to see the girl. Is she as fair
 As Serafino painted ?

Tor.

Faith, my lord,
 She 's fair enough to justify more sonnets
 Than e'er fat Petrarch pumped out for his Laura.
 She is a paragon of blushing girlhood,
 Full of temptation to the finger-tips.

I marvel at myself, that e'er I yielded
This amorous enterprize, even to you ;
But that my loyalty outbears my love.

Man.

I will requite your loyalty, fear not ;
But where shall we bestow ourselves ?

Tor.

In here ; [Lifting the arras.
The old crone showed it me but now — there 's cover
And peeping-place sufficient. Hark ! they come :
Stand close, my lord. [They retire behind the arras.

[Enter Fioradelisa and Brigitta R. I. E.

Bri.

And he was there to-night ?

Fio.

O yes ! He offered me the holy water
As I passed in. I trembled so, Brigitta,
When our hands met, I fear he must have marked it,
But that he seemed almost as trembling, too,
As I was.

Bri.

He ! a brazen popinjay,
I 'll warrant me, for all his downcast looks !
I wonder how my master would endure
To hear of such audacious goings on !

Fio.

That makes me sad. My father is so kind,
I cannot bear to have a secret from him.
Sometimes I feel as I would tell him all ;
But then, I think, perhaps he would forbid me
From going out to church ; and 't is so dull
To be shut up here all the long bright day :
From morn till dark to mark the busy stir
Under the window, and the happy voices

Of holiday-makers, that go out and in
 Just as they please. Look at the birds, Brigitta !
 Their wings are free, yet no harm comes to them ;
 I 'm sure they 're innocent ! And then to hear
 Sometimes the trumpets, as the knights ride by,
 And tramp of armèd men, sometimes a lute —

[*A lute sounds outside.*]

Hark, 't is his lute ! I know the air ; how sweet !
 My good Brigitta, would there be much harm
 If I touched mine — only a little touch —
 To tell him I am listening ?

Bri.

Holy saints,
 Was e'er such boldness ! I must have your lute
 Locked up. These girls ! these girls !
 Bar them from court,
 And they 'll find matter in church ;
 Keep them from speech,
 And they 'll make cat-gut do the work of tongue !
 Better be charged to keep a cat from cream,
 Than a girl from gallants !

[*Lute ceases.*]

Fio.

Nay, but, good Brigitta,
 This gentleman is none.

Bri.

How do you know ?

Fio.

He never speaks to me, scarce looks, or if
 He do, it is but to withdraw his gaze
 As hastily as I do mine. I 've seen him
 Blush when our eyes met ; not like yon rude man,
 Who pressed upon me with such words and looks
 As made me blush — you know the time —
 When that kind lady, Countess Malatesta,
 Scarce saved me from his boldness.

Bri.

Tilly-vally !

There are more ways of bird-catching than one ;
He 's the best fowler who least scares his quarry.

But I must go and see the supper toward.

Your father will be here anon.

[*Exit L. i. e.*]*Fio.*

Dear father !

Would he were here, that I might rest my head
Upon his breast, and have his arms about me ;

For then I feel there 's something I may love,

And not be chidden for it.

[*Lute sounds.*]

Hark ! again !

If I durst answer !

How sad he must be, out there in the dark,

Not knowing if I mark his music.

[*Takes her lute, then puts it away.*]

No !

My father would be angry : sad enough

To have one joy I may not share with him ;

Yet there can be no harm in listening.

I thought to-night he would have spoken to me,

But then Brigitta came, and he fell back.

I 'm glad he did not speak, and yet I 'm sorry ;

I should so like to hear his voice—just once!—

He comes in my dreams, now, but he never speaks—

[*Lute ceases.*]

I 'm sure 't is soft and sweet !

[*Listening.*]

His lute is hushed.

What if I touched mine, now that he is gone ?

I must not look out of the casement !—Yes,

I 'm sure he 's gone !

[*Takes her lute and sings.*][*Note.—Song may be given or omitted at pleasure.*]*Man.* *Aside, lifting the arras.**She is worth ten Ginevras !*

Not yet!

Tor.

[*Holding him back.*

Man.

Unhand me, I will speak to her!

Tor.

My lord! It is Bertuccio! In, quick!

[*Bertuccio appears at the door R. I. E.—His dress is sober and his manner composed.—He stands for a moment at the door fondly contemplating Fiordelisa; then steps quietly forward.*

Ber.

My own!

Fio.

[*Turning suddenly and flinging herself into his arms—*

My father!

Ber.

Closer, closer yet!

Let me feel those soft arms about my neck,
This dear cheek on my heart! No, do not stir,
It does me so much good! I am so happy;
These minutes are worth years.

Fio.

My own dear father!

Ber.

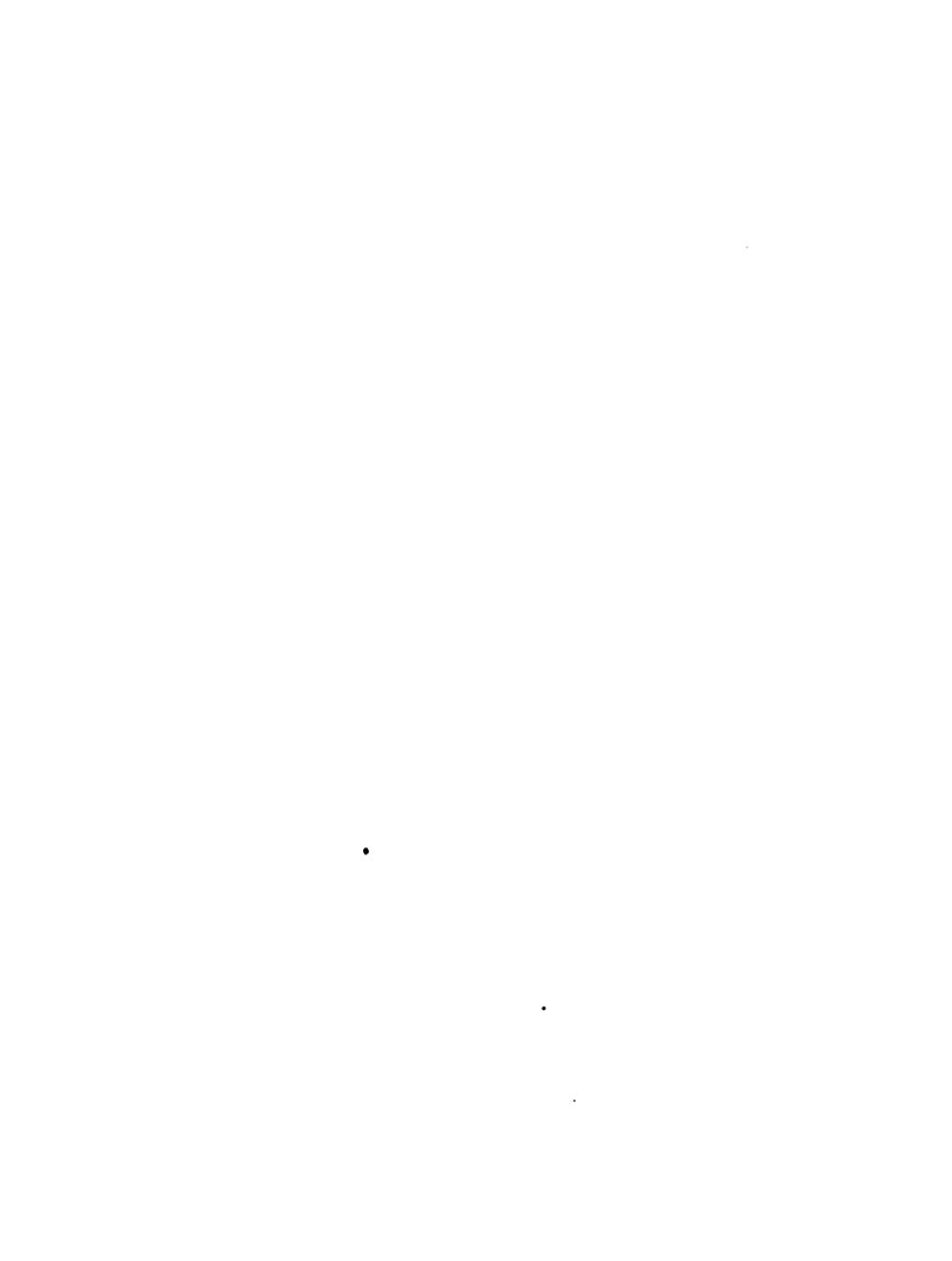
Let me look at thee, darling. Why, thou growest
More and more beautiful! Thou 'rt happy here?
Hast all that thou desirest, thy lute, thy flowers?
She loves her poor old father? Blessings on thee,
I know thou dost, but tell me so.

[*Bertuccio sits. Fiordelisa kneels beside him.*

Fio.

I love you,

I love you very much! I am so happy



When you are with me. Why do you come so late,
And go so soon? Why not stay always here?

Ber.

Why not! why not! O, if I could! To live
Where there's no mocking, and no being mocked,
No laughter, but what's innocent; no mirth
That leaves an after-bitterness like gall.

Fio.

Now you are sad! There's that black, ugly cloud
Upon your brow; you promised, the last time,
It never should come when we were together.
You know when you're sad I'm sad too.

Ber.

My bird!
I'm selfish even with thee; let dark thoughts come,
That thy sweet voice may chase them, as they say
The blessed church-bells drive the demons off.

Fio.

If I but knew the reason of your sadness,
Then I might comfort you; but I know nothing,
Not even your name.

Ber.

I have no name for thee,
But "father."

Fio.

In the convent, at Ceséna,
Where I was reared, they used to call me orphan.
I thought I had no father, till you came,
And then they needed not to say I had one;
My own heart told me that.

Ber.

I often think
I had done well to have left thee there, in the peace
Of that still cloister: but it was too hard —
My empty heart so hungered for my child;

For those dear eyes that look no scorn for me,
 That voice that speaks respect and tenderness,
 Even for me. My dove, my lily-flower,
 My only stay in life. O God ! I thank thee
 That thou hast left me this at least.

[*He weeps.*

Fio.

Dear father !

You 're crying now ; you must not cry, you must not,
 I cannot bear to see you cry.

Ber.

Let be !

'T were better than to see me laugh.

Fio.

But wherefore ?

You say you are so happy here, and yet
 You never come but to weep bitter tears.
 And I can but weep too, not knowing why.
 Why are you sad ? O, tell me, tell me all !

Ber.

I cannot. In this house I am thy father ;
 Out of it what I am boots not to say ;
 Hated, perhaps ; or envied ; feared, I hope,
 By many ; scorned by more, and loved by none.
 In this one innocent corner of the world
 I would but be to thee a father ; something
 August and sacred.

Fio.

And you are so, father.

Ber.

I love thee with a love strong as the hate
 I bear for all but thee. [*Fiordelisa starts in alarm.*
 Come, sit beside me,
 With thy pure hand in mine, and tell me still,
 "I love you," and "I love you ;" only that.
 Smile on me—so !—thy smile is passing sweet !

Thy mother used to smile so once. O God !
I cannot bear it. Do not smile, it wakes
Memories that tear my heart-strings. Do not look
So like thy mother, or I shall go mad !

Fio.

O, tell me of my mother !

Ber.

No, no, no !

Fio.

She 's dead ?

Ber.

Yes.

Fio.

You were with her when she died ?

Ber.

No ! leave the dead alone, talk of thyself —
Thy life here. Thou heed'st well my caution, girl,
Not to go out by day, nor show thyself
There, at the casement.

Fio.

Yes ; some day, I hope,
You will take me with you, but to see the town ;
'T is so hard to be shut up here, alone.

Ber.

Thou hast not stirred abroad ?

Fio.

Only to vespers ;
You said I might do that, with good Brigitta.
I never go forth or come in alone.

Ber.

That 's well. I grieve that thou shouldst live so close.
But if thou knew'st what poison 's in the air,
What evil walks the streets, how innocence

Is a temptation, beauty but a bait
 For desperate desires :—no man, I hope,
 Has spoken to thee ?

Fio.

Only one.

Ber.

Ha ! who ?

▲

Fio.

I know not ; 't was against my will.

Ber.

You gave
 No answer ?

Fio.

No ; I fled.

Ber.

He followed you ?

Fio.

A gracious lady gave me kind protection,
 And bade her train guard me safe home. O, father,
 If you had seen how good she was, how gently
 She soothed my fears—for I was sore afraid—
 I 'm sure you 'd love her.

Ber.

Did you learn her name ?

Fio.

I asked it, first, to set it in my prayers,
 And then, that you might pray for her.

Ber.

I pray !
 Her name ?

[*Aside.*
 [To *Fiordelisa.*

Fio.

The Countess Malatesta.

Ber.

Count Malatesta's wife protect my child !

[*Fior delisa starts up in alarm at his manner.*
You have not seen her since ?

Fio.

No ; though she urged me

So hard to come to her ; and asked my name ;
And who my parents were ; and where I lived.

Ber.

You did not tell her ?

Fio.

Who my parents were ?

How could I, when I do not know it ?

Ber.

Patience, my darling ; trust thy father's love,
That there is reason for this mystery.

The time may come when we may live in peace,
And walk together free, under free heaven :
But that cannot be here, nor now !

Fio.

O, when,

When shall that time arrive ?

Ber.

When what I live for
Has been achieved.

Fio.

What you live for ?

Ber.

Revenge !

[*Rises and goes R.*

Fio.

O do not look so, father !

Ber.

Listen, girl :

You asked me of your mother ; it is time

You should know why all questioning of her

Racks me to madness. Look upon me, child ;
 Misshapen as I am, there once was one
 Who, seeing me despised, mocked, lonely, poor,
 Loved me, I think, most for my misery :
 Thy mother, like thee, just so pure, so sweet.
 I was a public notary in Ceséna ;
 Our life was humble, but so happy : thou
 Wert in thy cradle then, and many a night
 Thy mother and I sate hand in hand together,
 Watching thy innocent smiles, and building up
 Long plans of joy to come.

Fio.

Alas ! she died.

Ber.

Died !

There are deaths 't is comfort to look back on ;
 Hers was not such a death. A devil came
 Across our quiet life, and marked her beauty :
 She scorned his offers,
 But he, a noble, great and powerful,
 Bore her—by force—away, and from that hour
 I never saw her more : they brought me news
 That she was dead !

Fio.

Ah me !

Ber.

And I was mad,
 For years and years, and when my wits came back —
 If e'er they came — they brought one haunting purpose,
 That since has shaped my life — to have revenge :
 Revenge upon her wronger and his order !

Fio.

Father, 't is not for me to question with you :
 But, *think* — revenge belongeth not to man ;
It is God's attribute ! usurp it not !

Ber.

Preach abstinence to him that dies of hunger;
 Tell the poor wretch who perishes of thirst
 There 's danger in the cup his fingers clutch ;
 But bid me not forswear revenge. No word !
 Thou knowest now why I mew thee up so close ;
 Keep thee out of the streets ; shut thee from eyes
 And tongues of lawless men ; for, in these days,
 All men are lawless. 'T is because I fear
 To lose thee, as I lost thy mother.

Fio.

Father,
 I 'll pray for her.

Ber.

Do, and for me ; good-night !

Fio.

O, not so soon ; with all these sad, dark thoughts,
 These bitter memories. You need my love :
 I 'll touch my lute for you, and sing to it.
 Music, you know, chases all evil angels.

Ber.

I must go : 't is grave business calls me hence.

'T is time that I was at my post. [Aside.]
 My own, sleep in thine innocence. [To Fiordelisa.]
 Good-night ! good-night !

Fio.

But let me see you to the outer door.

Ber.

Not a step further, then. [Music till they go out.]
 God guard this place,
 That here my flower may grow, safe from the blight
 Of look, or word impure, a holy thing
 Consecrate to thy service, and my love !

*[Exeunt Bertuccio and Fiordelisa R. L. E.—Mang-
 fredi and Torelli come forward.]*

Man.

His daughter ! That so fair a branch should spring
From such a gnarlèd and misshapen stock !

Tor.

But did you mark how he raved of revenge
Upon our order ?

Man.

By the mass, I think
That Guido Malatesta is the man
That played him the shrewd trick he told the girl of.
'T was at Ceséna, marked you ; the time fits.
That 's why he hounds me on after the countess.
What ! must I be the tool of his revenge ?
I 'll teach this scurril slave to strike at nobles !

Tor.

Hark ! what 's that ? [Listening.]

Man.

'T is outside the window !

Tor.

Yes,
By Bacchus, some one climbs the balcony ! [Listening.]

Man.

A gallant ?

Tor.

In, sir ; see the play played out.

Man.

But I 'll not be forestalled !

Tor.

We 've time enough. [They retire into the recess.]

[Enter Aquila from the balcony.

Aqu.

Pardon, sweet saint, if I profane thy shrine.
I watched Bertuccio forth; he passed me close;
I feared he would have seen me. I have sworn
Not to betray their foul design to him.

And to warn her this means alone is left me. [Music.
Hark! 't is her gracious step; she comes this way.

[Enter Fiordelisa.

Fio.

Comfort of the afflicted, comfort him!
Turn his revengeful purpose to submission,
And grant that I may grow to take the place
My mother has left empty in his heart!
He's gone! And I had not the heart to speak
Of the young gentleman who follows me.
He asked if any spoke to me; I told
The truth: he never spoke to me.

[Seeing Aquila.—Music ceases.

Who's there? Brigitta! help!

Aqu.

Silence! but have no fear;
I am not here to harm you; do not tremble.
I would die, lady, rather than offend you.

Fio.

O sir, how came you here?

Aqu.

I knew no other way
But by the balcony. Desperate occasions
Dispense with ceremony. My respect
Is absolute. Fear not: I am not here
To say "I love you," nor to tell you how
For months your face has been my beacon star.
My passion never would have found a tongue,
It is too reverent: but your safety, lady,
I can be bold for that.



Fio.

My safety !

Aqu.

Threatened

With desperate danger. Think you one so fair
 Could even pray in safety in Faenza ?
 You have been seen : your beauty hath been buzzed
 In the court's amorous ear : there is a project
 To scale your balcony to-night.

Fio.

O father !

Aqu.

He cannot save you ; what were his sole strength
 Against the bravos that the duke commands,
 For any deed of ill ! My arm and sword
 Are stronger than your father's, and are yours
 As absolutely. And yet what were these ?
 I could die for you, but I could not save you.

Fio.

What shall I do .

Aqu.

Have you no friends, protectors
 To whom you might betake yourself ?

Fio.

Alas !

I am a stranger here.

Aqu.

Think, have you none ?

Fio.

Ha ! if the Countess Malatesta ——

Aqu.

What ?

You know her ?

Fio.

She once rescued me from insult
Of a rude man ; and promised help whene'er
I chose to seek it.

Aqu.

She is good, and pure,
And powerful moreover — that 's the chief.
Go to her straight ; you have no time to lose.
Midnight is fixed for their foul enterprize.

Fio.

But how to find the house ? And then the streets
Are dark and dangerous. I 've but our servant,
Brigitta —

Aqu.

Not a word to her ! She 's false.
Can you trust me ? I 'll lead you to the countess.

Fio.

[*Aside.*

Were this a stratagem !

Aqu.

I see you doubt me :
I know you have good cause to doubt all men.
O, could I bare my heart, and show you there
Your image set amongst its holiest thoughts,
Beside my mother's well-remembered face !
Could truth speak with the tongue, look from the eyes,
You would not doubt me. What can oaths avail ?
He who could cheat you would not fear to cheat
God and his saints ! Lady, it is the truth
That I have spoken ! May heaven give you faith
To trust in me ; but if not, I will stay,
And die in your defence.

Fio.

Sir, I will trust you,
And heaven so deal with you as you with me.
Go with me to the Countess Malatesta ;
I 'll seek the shelter of her roof to-night,
To-morrow must bring counsel for the future.

Aqu.

O, bless you for this trust! Come, quick, but soft.
 Put on your veil; fear not, I am your guard,
 Your slave, your sentinel. I crave no guerdon,
 Not even a look! Enough for me to save you.

[*Exeunt Fiordelisa and Dell' Aquila* R. I. E.

Man.

[*Breaking from behind the arras, Torelli following him.*

Why did you hold me back? Our project 's marred.
 This moonstruck poet bears away the prize,
 And I am fooled.

Tor.

Nay, trust my cooler brain.
 I 'll follow him to Malatesta's. Sure
 He 'll give her shelter?

Man.

In his lady's absence?

Tor.

Even so. The old ruffian can be courteous
 When there 's a pretty face in question!

Man.

Let him!
 I 'll break his house, or any man's that dares
 Set his locks in the way of my good pleasure!

Tor.

Why not? 'T will give a double pungency
 To our revenge upon Bertuccio.
 We only looked to keep the foul-mouthed knave
 Out of the way while we bore off his pearl;
 But now we 'll use him for the robbery.
 He shall see us scale Malatesta's windows;
 But she whom we bear thence, muffled and gagged,
Shall be the hunch-backed scoffer's pretty daughter.

Man.

A rare revenge ! and so this brain-sick poet
 And my curst jester may console each other.
 Watch them to Malatesta's ; I 'll to our friends
 And find Bertuccio by San Stefano.

[*Exit Manfredi by secret door.* [*Exit Torelli*
 R. I. E.

Scene Second. { A STREET IN FAENZA [FIRST GROOVES].
 NIGHT. BELL STRIKES NINE.

[*Enter Bertuccio.*

Ber.

The hour is struck, they will be here anon ;
 Trust them to keep a tryst for a villainous deed.
 I had need to whet the memory of my wrong,
 Or my girl's angel face and innocent tongue
 Had shaken even my steadfastness of purpose.
 And Malatesta's wife has done her kindness :
 I would she had not. But, what 's such slight service
 To my huge wrong ? Let me but think of that !
 I grow too human near my child ; I lack
 The sharp sting of court scorn to spur the sides
 Of my intent. With her I 'm free to weep ;
 With them I still must laugh, still be their ape
 To mop, and mow, and wake their shallow mirth.
 True, I can sometimes bite, as monkeys do.
 They 'll make mirth of that too ! O, courtly sirs !
 Sweet-spoken, stalwart gallants ! if you knew
 The hate that rankles underneath my motley,
 The scorn that barbs my wit, the bitterness
 That grins behind my laughter, you would start,
 And shudder o'er your cups, and cross yourselves
 As if the devil were in your company.
 Once my revenge achieved, I 'll spurn my chain,



Fool it no more, but give what 's left of life
 To thought of her I 've lost, and love of her
 That yet is left me.

[Enter *Manfredi, Ascolti, and Ordelaffi, masked and cloaked, L. I. E.*

Man.

Hist, Bertuccio!

Ber.

Here, gossip Galeotto ; you are punctual :
 Ascolti too. Grave Signor Florentine,
 We 'll show you how the gallants of Faenza
 Treat greybeards who aspire to handsome wives.
 Remember your beard 's grizzled, and beware.

Asc.

I will stand warned. You have the ladders here ?

Ber.

The lackeys wait in charge of them hard by.
 But where 's Torelli ? we shall want his help.

Ord.

Pshaw ! our three swords are plenty.

Ber.

Cry you mercy !
 'T is not Torelli's sword we want.

Ord.

What then ?

Ber.

His marvellous quick scent of danger, man.
 Stick to his skirts, I 'll answer for 't you 're safe.

[*All laugh.*

Perhaps he smelt some risk of buffets here
 And so has ta'en him home to bed.

Man.

Away

Towards Malatesta's house; 't was there he promised
To meet us. Sirrah fool, be it thy post
To hold the ladder while we mount; and see
Thou play'st us no jade's trick, or 'ware the whip!

Ber.

Fear not, magnanimous gossip; do your work
With as good will as I do mine. The countess
Sleeps in the chamber
That rounds the angle of the southern front;
I came but now by the palace: all was quiet.

Man.

Set on then, cautiously: use not your swords
Unless on strong compulsion; blood tells tales,
And I want no more feuds upon my hands.

[*Exeunt* R. I. E.]

Scene Third. { EXTERIOR OF MALATESTA'S PALACE. A
WINDOW ON THE SECOND FLOOR, WITH
A BALCONY. MOONLIGHT.

[Enter *Fiordelisa* and *Dell' Aquila*, followed by
Torelli, at a distance, R. U. E.]

Aqu.

Be of good cheer, this is the house; I 'll knock
And summon forth the count. [Knocks.]

Fio.

O, sir! what thanks
Can e'er repay this kindness?

Aqu.

But remember
Who 't was that did it, I am thanked enough.

Fio.

I 'll pray for you, after my father. Hark !

Aqu.

They come ! [Enter a Servant from house.
Two strangers who crave instant speech [To Servant.
Of the Count Malatesta. [Exit Servant.

Aqu.

And should I see your father ?

Fio.

Then you know him ?

Aqu.

Yes.

Fio.

And his occupation ? [He bows.
'T is more than I do, sir, that am his child.
I do not even know his name.

Aqu.

What he
Keeps secret from you 't is not mine to tell ;
'T were well you should not question him too closely :
He shall learn you are safe.

Fio.

And tell him, too,
That 't was you saved me, sir. Promise me that.

[Enter Malatesta, and two servants with lights,
from house.

Mal.

Who is it would have speech of Malatesta ?

Aqu.

You know me, count?

Mal.

Dell' Aquila, well met!
 But your companion?
 Ha! a petticoat!
 So ho, my poet!

[*Aside to Aquila.*]*Aqu.*

Pardon, if I pray
 This lady's name may rest a secret, count;
 She is in grievous danger; one from which
 Your house can shelter her. She owes already
 Your countess much, for good help given at need,
 So craves to increase the debt.

Mal.

My house is hers,
 But she should know my countess is not here.

Fio.

Not here!

Mal.

But, if she dare trust my grey hairs,
 She shall have shelter.

Aqu.

Nay, she cannot choose.

Mal.

I'll give her my wife's chamber, if she will;
 Her women to attend her.

Aqu.

All she needs
 Is your roof's shelter for the night; to-morrow
 Must see her otherwise bestowed.

Mal.

Go in

Fair lady; my poor house, with all that's in it
 Is at your service. Had my wife been here,

You had had gentler tendance ; as it is
I 'll lead you to her chamber, and there leave you.

Tor.

[Aside.]

Now to the hunters : I 've marked down the deer.

[Exit R. U. E.]

Mal.

[To Aquila.]

You will not stay and crush a cup with me ?

Aqu.

No, not to-night.

Did you not well to trust me ?

[To Fiordelisa.]

Farewell ; think of me in your prayers.

Fio.

I cannot

Choose but do that, sir.

O, the thought of him

[Aside.]

Will come, henceforth, betwixt my prayers and heaven !

[Exit Malatesta, leading in Fiordelisa.]

Aqu.

His child ! Since when did grapes grow upon thistles ?

And yet I 'm glad to know the tie that binds

The two together such a holy one.

[The scene gradually becomes dark.]

Sweet angel, sister angels guard thy sleep !

Now, to seek out Bertuccio, and tell him

The danger she has 'scaped, and thank the saints

That made me her preserver.

[Exit L. I. E.]

[Brief pause.—Music.—Enter Bertuccio, Manfredi, Ascoli, Ordelaffi, and Torelli, with servants carrying ladder R. U. E.—Music ceases as they enter.]

Man.

Softly, you knaves ! With velvet tread, like tigers !

Ber.

Say rather, cats.

[A light appears at the window.]

Tor.

This is the balcony.

*Ber.*I have noted in this summer weather
The window's left unbarred.*Asc.*Ha, there's a light!
If she were stirring?*Ber.*What an' if she were?
A sudden spring—a cloak flung o'er her head—
If she have time to scream you are but bunglers.*Man.*

My cloak will serve.

[*Takes off cloak.**Asc.*If she alarm the house
It might go hard with us.*Ber.*O, cats that long
For fish, yet fear to wet your feet! I'll shame you.
Let me mount first.
Give me your cloak, gossip![*To Manfredi.**Man.*By your leave, fool, I'll net my own bird. Back!
Hold thou the ladder; that is lacquey's work,
And fits thee best. Ascoli and Torelli,
Guard the approaches. I and Ordelaffi
Will be enough to mount, and snare the game.[*The light is extinguished; the servants set up
ladder against the balcony. Ordelaffi mounts the
ladder first; then Manfredi.**Ber.*

All's dark now. Up!

[*Bertuccio holds ladder.**Man.*[*On ladder.*Why, rogue, how thy hand shakes!
Is 't fear?

Ber.

'T is inward laughter, Galeotto,
To think how blank Guido will look to-morrow
To find the nest cold, and his mate borne off!

[*Music pp. Manfredi and Ordelaffi enter the house, through the window.—Moonlight till they come down the ladder.*

Ber.

[*Listening.*

Ha! they are in by this time. Cautious fools!
I had done 't myself in half the space! So, Guido,
You love your young wife well, they say; that's brave.
Now, Malatesta,
Learn what it is to wake, and find her gone
That was the pride and joy of your dim eyes,
The comfort of your age. I welcome you
To the blank hearth, the hunger of the soul,
The long, dark days, and miserable nights!
These you gave me; I give them back to you!
I, the despised, deformed, dishonoured jester,
Have reached up to your crown, and pulled it down,
And flung it in the mire as you flung mine!

[*A stifled cry within.—Manfredi and Ordelaffi re-appear on the balcony, bearing Fiordelisa in their arms, muffled in Manfredi's cloak.—They come down the ladder.*

Man.

Away all; to my garden house,
There to bestow the prize!

[*Exeunt all but Bertuccio R. U. E., the servants carrying off the ladder.*

Ber.

'T is done!
Now, murdered innocent, thou art avenged!
I cannot sleep! I'll walk the night away!
It is no night for me, my day has come! [*Music forte.*

CURTAIN.

Act Third.

THE NEXT DAY.

Scene First.

MANFREDI'S HOUSE. A ROOM WITH
DOORS L. I. E. AND R. I. AND 2. E.,
COMMUNICATING WITH AN INNER
CHAMBER. TABLES AND CHAIRS R.
AND L.

[Enter Fiordelisa R. I. E.

Fio.

Where am I? What has happened? Let me think.
Those men—that blinding cloak—the fresh night air
That struck upon my face—then a wild struggle,
In strong and mastering arms—then a long blank.
I must have fainted; when I woke I lay
On a rich couch in that room. Has he brought me
Into the very danger that he said
He came to take me from? O cruel! No,
Falsehood could ne'er have found such words, such looks.
Father! O, when he comes and finds me gone!
I must go hence! [Looking round.
That door — [She runs to door L. I. E.
'T is locked! [Shaking door.
Help! help!
How dare they draw their bolts on me? My father
Shall punish them for this! I will go forth!

[Shakes door again.—The door opens from within.
At last! Who'e'er you are, sir, help me hence!

[Enter Manfredi L. I. E.
Take me back to my father! He will bless you,
Reward you —

Man.

Nay, your own lips must do that.

Fio.

O, they shall bless you too, sir.

Man.

To be blessed

With that sweet mouth were well, yet scarce enough.

Fio.

O, sir, we waste time. Set what price you will

On the great service, I am sure my father

Will pay you. [Manfredi relocks the door L. I. E.

Man.

If we 're to discuss your ransom

'T were fairest we should do it with closed doors :

The terms can scarce be settled till you know

Your prison—jailer—in what risk you stand.

First, for your prison : know you where you are ?

Fio.

No.

Man.

In the Duke Manfredi's palace. Next :

Know you your jailer ?

Fio.

Who ?

Man.

Manfredi's self.

Fio.

Woe 's me !

Man.

What ? Is the news so terrible ?

Fio.

I 've heard Brigitta and my father, too,

Speak of the Duke Manfredi.

*Man.**[Aside.]*

Here 's a chance
 To hear a genuine judgment of myself!
 They said —

Fio.

That he was cruel, bold, unsated
 In thirst for evil pleasures; it was odds
 Whether more feared or hated in Faenza.

*Man.**[Aside.]*

Trust the crowd's garlic cheers and greasy caps!
 The knaves shall know me worse ere they have done.
 I thank you, pretty one; I am the duke.

Fio.

Then heaven have mercy on me!

Man.

If report
 Speak truth, your prayer were idle; but report
 Is a sad liar. Do I look the ogre
 They painted to you? Nay, my fluttered dove,
 Smooth but those ruffled feathers; look around you.
 Is this so grim a dungeon? Was your couch
 Last night so hard, your 'tendance so ungentle?
 I am your prisoner, fairest, not you mine.

Fio.

Then let me go.

Man.

Not till you know at least,
 What you will lose by going. All Faenza
 Is mine, and she I favour may command
 Whate'er Faenza holds of wealth or pleasure;
 I 'll pour them at her feet, and after fling
 Myself there too, to woo a gracious word.
 What 's life ungraced by love! a dismal sky
 Without sun, moon, or starlight! 'T is a cup



Drained of the wine that reddened in its gold,
 A lute shorn of its strings, a table stripped
 Of all its festal meats, mere life in death.
 A jewel like thy beauty is not meet
 To be shut in a chest ; it should be set
 To shine in princely robes, to grace a crown.
 I would set thee in mine.

[Approaching her.

Fio.

Stand back, my lord.

Man.

[Halting.

Why, little fool, I would not harm a hair
 On thy fair head. Think what thy life has been,
 How dull, and dark, and dreary ! It shall be
 As bright, and glad, and sunny, as the prime
 Of summer flowers. Only repel not joy
 Because it comes borne in the hand of love.

Fio.

O, you profane that name ! Is love the friend
 Of night and violence and robbery ?
 Let me go hence, I say. I have a father
 Who 'll make you terribly aby this wrong,
 Lord as you are !

Man.

Your father ! By the mass,
 She makes me laugh ! Your father, girl ! Bertuccio !

Fio.

That I should learn my father's name from him !
 Yes, duke, my father !

Man.

Why, he is my slave,
 A thing that crouches to me like my hound,
 To beg for food, or deprecate the lash,
 My butt, my whipping-block, my fool in motley.

Fio.

It is not true. This is a lie, like all
That you have said. Let me go forth, I say.

Man.

You 're in my palace. Here are none but those
To whom my will is law; your calls for help
Will only bring more force—if I could stoop
To use force with a lady.

Fio.

Then you have
Some manhood in you. Look, sir, at us two:
You are a duke, you say; your power but bounded
By your own will. I am a poor weak girl,
E'en weaker than I knew, if what you say
Touching my father, be the truth. What honour
Is to be won on me? Yet, won it may be,
By yielding to my prayers to be set free,
To be sent home. O, let me but go hence,
As I came hither; I will speak to none
Of this night's outrage; not even to my father.

Man.

Ask anything but this.

Fio.

Nothing but this!
You have a wife, my lord; what if she knew?

Man.

The more need to take care you tell her not.
Come, little one, give up these swelling looks,
Though they become you mightily. [Approaching her.

Fio.

Stand off! [He advances; she retreats to R. 2. E.
Help! help!

A door! ha!

[She opens it and rushes in.

Man.

Deeper in the toils ! [Locking the door.
 The lamb seeks shelter in the wolf's own den ! [Laughs.

Tor.[*Outside*, L. I. E.

My lord !

Man.

Torelli's voice !
 How now, Torelli ?

[*Unlocks the door* L. I. E.[*Enter Torelli.**Tor.*

My lord, the duchess is returned.

Man.

Why, man,
 Thy news is stale ; the duchess has been here
 These five hours ; she arrived, post haste, ere sunrise.
 She must have ridden in the dark. 'T was that
 Prevented me from making earlier matins
 Before my little saint here.

Tor.

Do you know
 What brought the duchess back so suddenly ?

Man.

Some jealous fancy pricked her, as I judge
 From her accost when we encountered first ;
 And, as I gathered, she suspects contrivance
 Betwixt me and the Countess Malatesta.
 'T was a relief, for once, that I could twit her
 With groundless fears. I told her Malatesta
 Rode yesterday with his lady to Ceséna,
 And, for more proof, repeated what he said,
 That on my wife's least summons she'd return ;
 So she has summoned her, in hopes, no doubt,
 To catch me in a lie. Her messenger
 Rode to Ceséna just at daybreak. Soon
 We may look for him back, bringing, I hope,
Ginevra Malatesta.

Tor.

This is rare.
So falls she off the scent, and leaves you here
To follow up your game with Fiordelisa.

Man.

Even so. I excused me from her presence
By work of state, for which to this pavilion
I had summoned you and the Envoy of Florence,
Said work of state being no less a one
Than to lend me your presence at the banquet
I mean to offer our fair prisoner.
Bid Ordelaffi and Ascolti hither,
And send my men with fruits and wines and sweetmeats,
All that is likeliest to tempt the sense
Of this scared bird.

Tor.

How did you find her, sir?

Man.

Beating her pretty wings against the bars;
Still calling for her father. Shrewdly minded
To peck instead of kissing, silly fledgling!
But I will tame her yet, till she shall come
To perch upon my finger.

Tor.

Where is she?

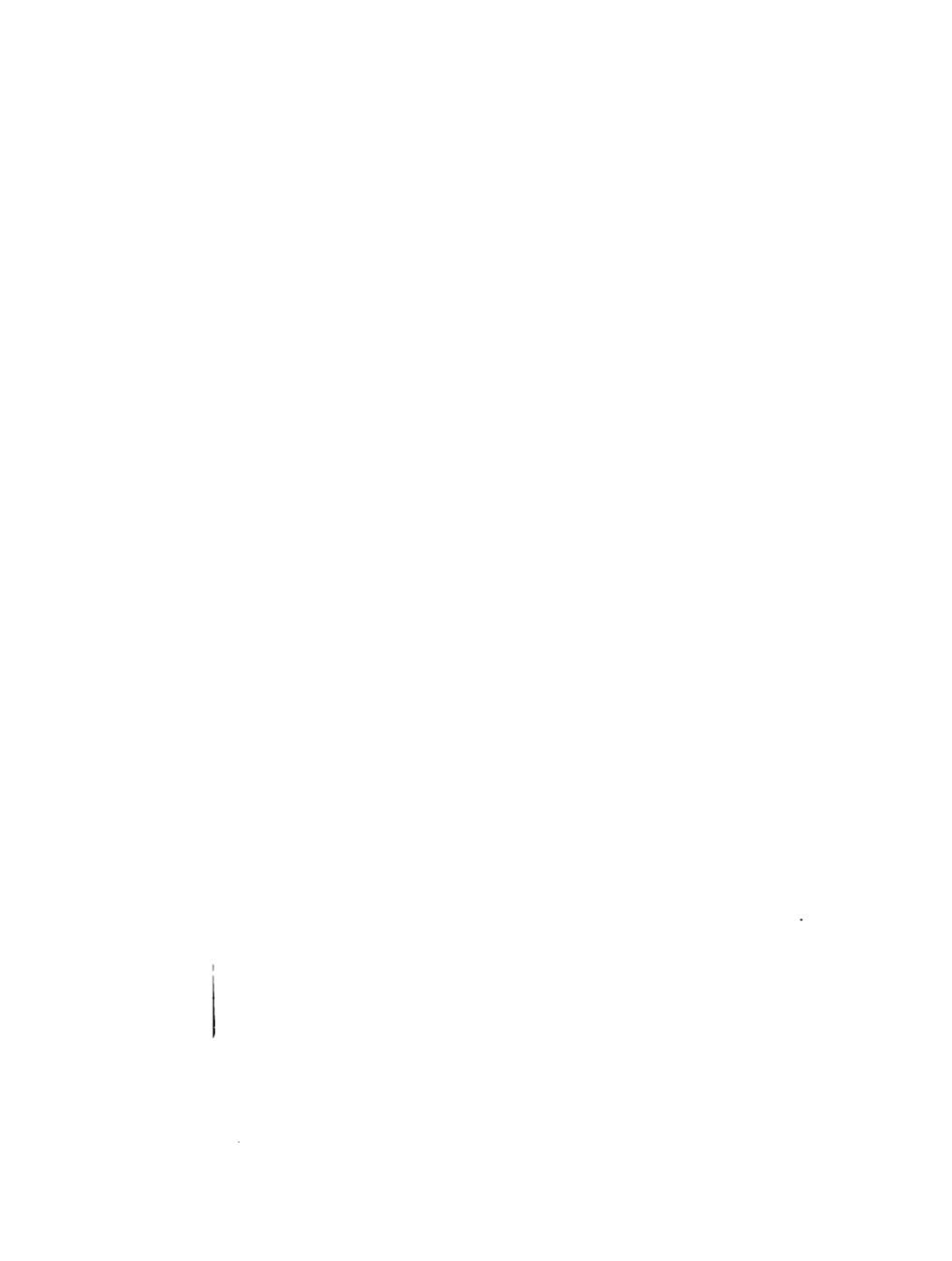
Man.

In the inner room, whither she fled but now.
Fear not, I turned the key on her; she's safe.

Tor.

I'll send what you command, and warn the rest
That you attend them. Good speed to your wooing.

Exit L. L. E.



Man.

Now for my prisoner! By gentle means
To gain her ear. Asmodeus, tip my tongue
With love's persuasion!

[*Exit into inner room R. 2. E. He locks the door within.—Enter the Duchess Francesca, masked, and Bertuccio, who has resumed his fool's dress,*
L. I. E.

Fra.

[*Unmasking.*

Was 't not Torelli went hence, even now?

Ber.

I think it was. Be sure he saw us not.

Fra.

Then you still bear me out my husband lies?
That Malatesta's wife has not gone hence?

Ber.

Trust a fool's eyes before a husband's tongue.
I say again, I was at hand last night
When your lord bore from Malatesta's house
Said Malatesta's wife. I saw the deed.
I heard the order given to bring her hither.

Fra.

Then 't was by force, not by the lady's will,
She came?

Ber.

Force? Quotha—force! How many ladies
Have had to bless the "force" that saved their tongue
An awkward "yes." See you not what an answer
"Force" finds for all? It stops a husband's mouth;
Crams its fist down the town's throat; nay; at a pinch
Perks its sufficient self in a wife's face:
Commend me still to "force." It saves more credits
Than e'er it ruined virtues. After folly,
I hold force the best mask that wit has found
To mock the world with! [Goes to door R. 2. E.]

Fra.

There's weight in that.
This violence would stand her in good stead,
Were she e'er called in question! Then, what matter,
So I be wronged, if 't is by force or will.
Would I had certain proof!

Ber.

Ha! You want proof?
Come here; [*The Duchess approaches him.*
Stand where I stand. Now listen—close.

Fra. [*Listening at door.*

My husband's voice, in passionate entreaty!

Ber.

Only *his* voice?

Fra.

An answering voice! a woman's!
These are your state affairs, my gracious duke!

[*Comes down.*

Ber.

If you would have more proof, I'll bring you where
You shall hear his humble tools in last night's business
Discuss the deed; all noble gentlemen,
Who'd pluck my hood about my ears if I
Durst hint a doubt of their veracity.

Fra.

Do so, and if they bear thy story out
I know my part.

Ber.

What, tears?

Fra.

Tears? Death to both!

Ber.

Take care. His guards are faithful. Can you trust
A hand to do the deed?

Fra.

I trust my own.

*Ber.*Women turn pale at blood. Your heart may fail you,
When the time comes to strike.*Fra.*Daggers for men.
I know a surer weapon.*Ber.*

Poison?

[Whispering.

*Fra.*Hush!
The Borgia's physician gave it me!
It may be trusted!

[Goes to door R. 2. E.

Ber.

[Aside.

My she-leopard's loosed at last!

[Exit L. 1. E.

Fra. [Still at the door, listening.

Past doubt, a woman's tongue! And now my husband's!
 How well I know the soft, smooth, pleading voice!
 The voice that drew my young heart to my lips,
 When, at my father's court, I plighted troth
 To him, and he to me. O bitterness!
 Now spurned for each new leman of the hour!
 O, he shall learn how terrible is hate
 That grows of love abused. [Taking a vial from her bosom.
 Come, bosom friend,
 That hast lain cold, of late, against my heart,
 As if to whisper to it, "Be thou stone,
 When the time calls for me." [Looking at the vial.
 Each drop 's a death.
 What matter who she be? Enough for me
 That she usurps the place that should be mine
 In Galeotto's love.

\Music.



Hark! some one comes.

[*She conceals the vial and resumes her mask.—Enter two Chamberlains with white wands, followed by Attendants bearing a banquet. They pass into the inner room.—After them Ascanio, with wine in a golden flagon, on a salver* L. I. E.

Hold, sir, set down your charge.

[*To Ascanio.*

Ascan.

By your leave, madam,
'T is for my lord.

Fra.

Since when was that an answer
To give thy lady?

[*Removes her mask.*

Ascan.

'T is the duchess!
Pardon; I knew you not.

[*Aside.*

[*To Francesca.*

Fra.

Enough, sir, set it down,
And wait without till I bid thee bear in.

[*Exit Ascanio* L. I. E.

What need of further proof? Is 't heaven or hell
That sends this apt occasion? Galeotto,
I warned thee, in the spring-time of our loves,
This hand could kill as easy as caress;
You laughed, and took it in your ampler palm,
And said that death were pleasant from such white
And taper fingers. Try it now!

[*She pours some of the contents of the vial into the flagon of wine.*

'T is done!

[*Re-enter Bertuccio* L. I. E.

Ber.

Hide, here, Madonna;
Here their lordships come!
I met them on the way, so brave and merry!

[*Opening door* R. I. E.

‘

My gossip Galeotto bids them here—
To feast with him and her!

[*Exit Bertuccio L. I. E.—Francesca starts as if stung; then rings bell on table R.—Re-enter Ascanio L. I. E.—She signs to him; he bears in the wine R. 2. E.*

Fra.

[*Aside.*

Their doom is sealed!

[*Exit Francesca R. 1. E.—Re-enter Bertuccio, with Ascoli and Ordelaffi L. I. E.*

Ber.

It is your due; you that go out bat-fowling
Lack wine o' mornings to keep up your hearts.

Ord.

Why thou wert there, knave; yet try thou to enter
Into the presence, and they 'll whip thee back.
His highness wants no fool to-day!

Ber.

That 's true,
With you two for his company. But tell me,
How will the lady relish, o'er her wine,
The cut-throat faces that she saw last night?
Methinks 't will mar her appetite.

Asc.

Be sure
She will not look so scared at us
As thou wouldest at the sight of her.

Ber.

Who, I?
Nay, I but held the ladder: we poor knaves
Must take the leavings of your rogueries,
As of your feasts. But prithee, Ordelaffi,
How looked she?

1

Ord.

Wouldst believe it ?
 Methought she had a something of thy favour ;
 As, if so crooked a thing could have a daughter,
 Thy daughter might have had.

[*All laugh.*—*Bertuccio* starts.

Asc.

How now ! he winces.
 Let 's in at once, my lord.

Ber.

I 'll marshal you ; who said that cap and bells
 Should be shut out ?

Asc.

Stand back, Sir Fool, 't were best ;
 You may repent your pressing on too far.

Ber.

I fain would see the lady ; 't is not often
 That one can carry a beauty off at night,
 And make her laugh i' the morning.

Ord.

Neither she,
 Nor you, I think, are like to breed much mirth
 Out of each other.

Ber.

Say you so ? Here goes !

[*He runs up to the door R. 2. E. Ascanio opens it and motions him back. The two Chamberlains appear at the open door.*

Ascan.

Stand back !

Ber.

I ! why I 'm the Fool ! Free o' the palace !
 Every place except the council-chamber,
 And in that I sit by proxy !

—

Ascan.

'T is the duke's strict order
 You enter not this room. [*Bertuccio presses forward.*
 Back ! or the grooms
 Shall score thy hunch to motley. [*Ascanio closes the door.*

Asc.

How now, sirrah,
 Call you this marshalling ?

Ber.

I am right served ! I forgot
 That fools in silks should take the precedence
 Of fools in motley ! Lead the way, my lords !

Ord.

Look, here comes Malatesta.

Ber.

Ha ! but stay
 To hear me gird at him ! You call me bitter ;
 Now you shall see how merciful I 've been.

Asc.

[*To Ordelaffi.*

Waste not your ears on him, the duke awaits us
 Beside his beauty—metal more attractive
 Than this curst word-catcher.

Ord.

Aye, aye, let 's in.

[*Exeunt Ordelaffi and Ascoli R. 2. E.—Enter
 Francesca R. 1. E.*

Ber.

Now, now, Madonna, have you proof enough ?

Fra.

Mountains of proof on proof, if proof were needed ;
 But had *disproof* come with them, and not proof,
 'T is all too late.

1

Ber.

How?

Fra.

I have drugged their wine.

They will sleep sound to-night.

[She retires up stage.]

*Ber.**[Aside.]*

Choose woman's hands,

You that would have grim work nimbly dispatched.

Here 's Malatesta! — looking black as night.

So, lord, I hope you liked your waking news.

Now, now, to gloat over his agony!

[Enter Malatesta L. I. E.]

Mal.

Ha, knave! I 'd see the duchess.

Ber.

Marvellous!

Mal.

How now?

Ber.

To think that they can make such caps

To hide all trace of them.

Mal.

Of what, knave?

Ber.

Horns.

Mal.

Rascal!

Ber.

I hope your lordship had good rest;

And that my lady, too, slept undisturbed.

Mal.

What mean you, sirrah?

Ber.

Nay, strain not so hard
 To keep it down ; you are among friends here.
 A grievous loss, no doubt,—but at your age
 You could scarce look to keep her to yourself.
 Others have lost wives, too,—poor knaves who thought
 To stick in their thrum-caps jewels that caught
 The eyes of nobles ; needs were they must yield
 Daughters—or wives.

Mal.

Art mad, or drunk, or both ?
 My errand 's to thy mistress, not to thee.
 Where is she ?

Fra.
Here, my lord !

[Coming forward.
 [They talk apart.

Ber.

He bears it bravely.
 But wounds will bleed under an iron corslet ;
 And how his must be bleeding—for he loved her ;
 The whole court vouches it.

[Francesca and Malatesta come forward.

Fra.

You say your lady slept not here, last night,
 But at Ceséna ?

Mal.

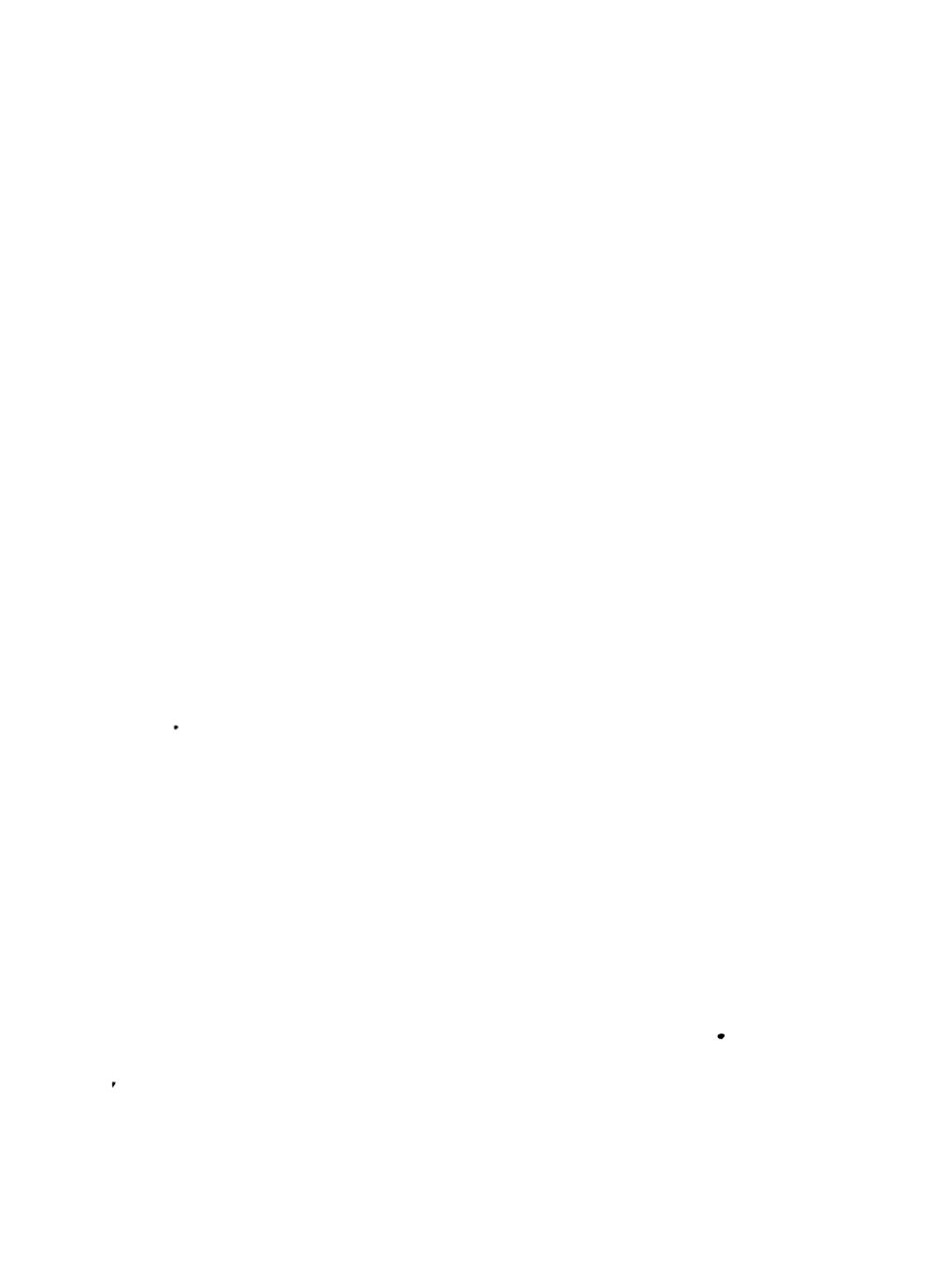
Or the devil 's in 't.
 I saw her safe bestowed there : I can trust
 My own eyes, or still better, my own bolts.

*Ber.**Aside.*

Is this old man, too, of Manfredi's council,
 To cheat his wife ?

Mal.

*I little thought to bring her back so soon ;
 But, on your summons, I have straight recalled her.*



Ber. [Coming between them.

And she is here: hold him to that, Madonna.

Mal.

Malapert dog!

Fra.

Pardon his licensed tongue.
I fain would see the lady.

Mal.

You shall see her;
I have not far to fetch her.

[*Exit L. I. E.*

Ber.

'T is a lie!—
A cursèd lie, to hide his own foul shame!
Believe him not!

Fra.

But if he bring the lady?

Ber.

Aye, if he bring the lady, then believe him!
He robs me of my right, taking his wrong [Aside.
With outward show of calm. Mine turned my brain.
I looked to see him mad, or drive him so!

Man.

[*Within.*

More wine, knave!

[*Ascanio enters R. 2. E., and goes out L. I. E.*

Fra.

Ginevra, or another, what of that?
The wrong 's the same, why not the same revenge?

Ber.

The same to you, but not the same to me! [Aside.
I tell you Malatesta's wife sits yonder— [To Francesca.
Sits at your husband's side. I saw her—I—
Borne off last night! I saw. There is no faith
In eyes or ears or truth, if 't were not she! .

[*Re-enter Malatesta, with Ginevra, L. I. E. Bertuccio's back is toward them.*

Mal.

Madam, my wife!

Ber.

[*Turning.*

Ginevra here! then who
Was that they carried from her bed last night?
Who is 't sits yonder?

Fra.

Tell me, gracious lady,
Where did you sleep last night?

Gin.

Where I scarce thought
To leave so soon, your highness; in Ceséna,
Within my husband's castle.

Fra.

Pardon, madam,
That I have set you on a hurried journey;
Still more that I have wronged you in my thoughts!

[*Laughter heard within.*

They laugh! laugh on, my lord, while it is time. [*Aside.*

Gin.

Wilt please you grant me audience: you shall hear
To the minute how my hours went yesterday,
Down to this moment.

Fra.

Come out in the air;
I stifle within hearing of their mirth. [*Aside.*
Stay here! see that the other 'scape me not.

[*To Bertuccio.*

[*Exeunt Francesca and Ginevra.* L. I. E.

1

Ber.

The other! Not Ginevra? Good, my lord,

[*To Malatesta, who goes to door R. 2. E.*

Your wife slept at Ceséna, yet her chamber
Was not untenanted last night, I 'll swear!

Mal.

And so thou mightst, yet break no oath.

Ber.

Who slept in 't?

Mal.

I know not. Ask Dell' Aquila: 't was he
Brought me the lady, craving shelter for her
From some great danger.

Ber.

But you saw her face?

Mal.

And if I did, think'st thou I 'd trust her name

To thy ass-ears? [*Strikes him.—Exit R. 2. E.*

Ber.

Fooled, mocked of my revenge!

The sweetest morsel on 't whipped from my teeth!

O, I could brain myself with my own bauble!

Dell' Aquila! He knows. [*Enter Dell' Aquila L. 1. E.*
[*Aside.*

Aqu.

Well met, Bertuccio!

I 've sought thee since this morning, nay, since midnight.

Ber.

Ha!

—

Aqu.

For a matter much concerns thy peace.

Thou hast a daughter.

[*Bertuccio starts.*

How I know thou hast

Matters not to my story.

Ber.

Hush, hush, hush !

If you know this, as you are Christian man

And poet,—poets should have softer hearts

Than courts and camps breed now-a-days,—O keep

The knowledge to yourself !

Aqu.

It is too late.

Torelli knew it : had set wolfish eyes

On her ——

Ber.

Well ? well ?

Aqu.

Had rung her beauty's praise

Here in the court — thou hast no friends here ——

Ber.

Well ?

Aqu.

They plotted how to lure thee from the house ;

And in thy absence to surprise her window,

And bear her off ! They bound me by an oath

To keep it secret from thee, not from her.

I swore to save her, or to lose myself ;

So found a desperate means of speech with her,

And warned her of her danger.

Ber.

Thanks, thanks, thanks,

But only warned her !

Aqu.

Placed her too in safety.

Ber.

O heaven! where?

Aqu.

In the house of Malatesta.

Ber.

My child in Malatesta's house last night?

Aqu.

Secure; even in the countess's own chamber.

Ber.

My child! My child!—wronged, murdered!

Aqu.

Ha! by whom?

Ber.

By me, by me! Her father, her own father,
That would have grasped heaven's vengeance,
And has drawn
The bolt on my own head—and hers—and hers!

Aqu.

What do you mean?

Ber.

I counselled the undoing
Of Malatesta's wife; I stood and watched,
And laughed for joy, and held the ladder for them,
And all the while 't was my own innocent child.
Look not so scared! 't is true!—I am not mad!
She's here—now—in their clutches! [Laughter within.
Hark, they laugh!
'T is the hyenas o'er their prey—my child!
And I stand here and cannot lift a hand!

Aqu.

Here 's mine, and my sword, too !

Ber.

O, what were that
Against their felon blades ?

Aqu.

True, true ! what aid ?
Ha ! there 's the duchess !

Ber.

I had forgotten her ! [Drawing *Aquila* to him.
Man, she has drugged their wine, the bony Death
Plays cupbearer to them ; if she drinks, she dies.

Look, look. Perchance that is the very wine.

[Enter *Ascanio*, with wine.
He assumes the Fool's manner.
Halt there, for the fool's toll. No wine goes in
But pays the fool's toll.

Ascan.

Out, knave, stand aside !

[*Bertuccio* overthrows the flagon from the salver.

Ber.

'T is forfeit by the law !

Ascan.

Thy back shall bleed

To make it up.

[Takes flagon, and exit L. I. E.

Aqu.

Torelli comes : if he goes in, could we but enter with him ;
A word from you might save her from the poison.

[Enter *Torelli* L. I. E.

Tor.

Good day, Sir Poet ; stand aside, Sir Fool.

Ber.

You are going in ? [Gets between *Torelli* and *Aquila*.

Tor.

Aye.

Ber.

There 's a shrewd hiatus
 Needs filling at the table. You have war
 And love; but, lacking poetry and folly,
 War is but butchery and love goes lame.
 Tuck us beneath your wings, sweet Baldassare,
 And you 'll be trebly welcome.

[Seizing him by one arm; motions Dell' Aquila to
 take the other.

Tor.

The duke for once has shut his doors against
 Both poetry and folly. He is cloistered
 For grave affairs.

Ber.

Tush, tell me not, sweet gossip.
 Why, man, I know that there 's a petticoat;
 And more, I know the wearer.

Tor.

Thou!

Ber.

You 've lost
 The rarest sport. Ascoli and Ordelaffi
 Have had their will of me. For once I 'll own
 You 've turned the tables fairly on the fool!
 That our Ginevra should be Fiordelisa,
 And poor Bertuccio not know! Ha, ha!
 O excellent! It was a sleight of hand
 I shall remember to my dying day.

Tor.

Nay, and thou tak'st it so?

Ber.

How should I take it?
 Besides the pleasantness of it, there 's the honour.
Think, my poor daughter in the duke's high favour.

Why, there are counts by scores
 Had pawned their scutcheons
 To come into such grace. I warrant now,
 You thought I 'd swear and storm, and rend you all,
 So shut me out. But, lo you, I am merry,
 And so shall she be, if you 'll let me in!
 But let me in, I 'll school the silly wench;
 Teach her what honour she has come to; thank
 The gracious duke, and play the merriest antics.
 You 'll swear you never saw me in such fooling;
 But take me in.

Tor.

Why now; the fool 's grown wise!
 I 'll tell the duke, perchance he 'll let thee in.

[*Exit Torelli R. 2. E.—Bertuccio, exhausted by his emotions, falls into chair L.*

Aqu.

Lives hang on minutes here. Said you the duchess
 Had mixed the poison, or but meant to mix it?

Ber.

There it is, man; I know not which: even now
 Death may be busy at her lips: once in,
 In my mad antics I might spurn the board,
 And spill the flagons as I did e'en now;
 But here I 'm helpless. O, Beëlzebub!
 Inspire them with desire to see a father
 Make laughter of the undoing of his child!
 Ha! some one comes: they 'll let me in!

Tor.

[*At the door.*

The duke will none of thy ape's tricks.

[*He closes the door. Bertuccio falls.*

Aqu.

What ho! Torelli!
 And you, within, you, my lord duke, 'fore all,
 I do proclaim you cowards, ruffians, beasts.
 Come out, if you be men, and drive my challenge
 Back in my throat, if you 've one heart among you!

Ber.

You speak to men; they 're fiends!

Aqu.

No hope, no hope!

Yes! here 's the duchess, she 's a woman still.

[*Lifts Bertuccio from the ground.*

[*Enter Francesca L. I. E.*

Ber.

[*Rushing to her.*

Madam, save my child!

The daughter that I love more than my life!

'T was she they seized last night, and she 's in there!

Fra.

Your child!

Ber.

From death, if not from wrong that 's worse than death,
You still may save her! Have the doors burst open!

You can command here next the duke. If not,
At least forbear the poison. [*Aside, to her.*

Fra.

[*Aside, to him.*

'T is too late.

The wine was here.

Ber.

Then this alone remains.

Help me, Aquila; help to burst the door!

[*They break open the door and rush out, followed by Francesca. Quick change to Banquet Hall. Table C. Manfredi, Fiordelisa, Malatesta, Ordelaffi, Ascolti, Torelli, and Attendants, discovered.*

Ber. and Aqu.

[*Without.*

Drink not, my lords!

Your wine is poisoned!

[*Manfredi staggers from his seat and falls dead L. Malatesta and others form group near him. Fiordelisa screams, rushes toward R., and faints in the arms of Dell' Aquila, who enters, with Bertuccio.*

All the Nobles.

Who did this deed?

Ber. [Leaping upon the table.

I!

[*Ordelaffi and Ascoli stab Bertuccio, who plunges forward and falls, but is not killed.—Enter Francesca.*

Fra.

He lies! 'T was I!
Before all men I 'll answer this.

Ber. [Crawling to his daughter.

Before heaven's judgment seat
How shall I answer this? [Indicating his daughter.
Dead! dead! My bird—
My lily flower—gone to thy last account,
All sinless as thou wert? My fool's revenge,
Ends but in this. Cold! cold!
Ha! a breath! She lives! she lives!
Say some of you, "She drank not," and I 'll bless
The man that says so; yea, so pray for him
As saints ne'er prayed!

Fio.

Father!

Tor.

She never drank! Thou hast her pure as when
She kissed thy lips last night!

Ber.

O, bless you, bless you!
But, alas! my child, I soon must leave thee!
My life ebbs fast. To thee, Aquila, thee—
The one true heart in all Faenza,
Do I bequeath my all!

[*Bertuccio joins the hands of Dell' Aquila and Fiordelisa.—They raise and support him to a chair.*

Mal.

Madam, you are our prisoner — [*To Francesca.*

Fra. [*Interrupting him.*

Prisoner?

My father, Giovanni Bentivoglio,
Stands at your gates, in arms. Let who will question
Francesca Bentivoglio of this deed. [*Exit R. U. E.*

Mal. [*To Bertuccio.*

Thou miscreant! what urged thee on to this?

Ber.

Vengeance!

Fio.

Father! —

Ber.

Aye, vengeance.
Guido Malatesta —

In me behold the wretched man whose wife,
Long years ago, you stole — you murdered! —
Antonio Bordiga!

Mal.

[*Falling, horror-stricken, into chair, and hiding his face.*

You!

Ber.

Ay: — thirsting for revenge, I moved the duke
To carry off your innocent Ginevra —

Your wife!

Though foiled, and slain, yet do I triumph here,
And thou shalt feel, at last, the Fool's revenge!
Guido Malatesta, with my dying breath,

I —

*Fio.**[Interrupting, and clinging to him.*

No! no! Father!

Ber.

I — I forgive thee.

[He falls.

Ah, thou saidst well, my child:

Vengeance is God's prerogative—not man's:

I have usurped it. Pray, O, pray for me.

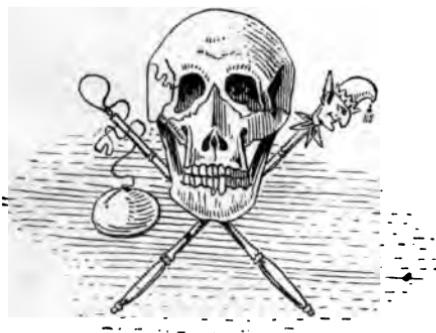
*[Fiordelisa supports his head.**Fio.*

Father!

[Bertuccio dies.

CURTAIN.





THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

APPENDIX.

I.—THE AUTHOR OF THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

TOM TAYLOR, the author of "The Fool's Revenge," was born at Sunderland, in England, in 1817. He received his education at the Grange School in that place, and at Glasgow University and at Trinity College, Cambridge; and he was graduated with honours. He subsequently held, for two years, the Professorship of English Language and Literature, at the University College, London; but in 1845 was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple. A few years later he entered the Civil Service of Great Britain, with which for a long time he was honourably connected, and from which he was finally retired with a pension. Tom Taylor is the author of many plays, and the adapter of many more. Prominent among the pieces with which his name is associated are "Still Waters Run Deep," "An Unequal Match," "The Ticket-of-Leave-Man," "Twixt Axe and Crown," "The Contested Election," "The Overland Route," "Anne Boleyn," "Joan of Arc," "New Men and Old Acres," "Clancarty," "Henry Dunbar," and "Our American Cousin."

This author has likewise distinguished himself in other branches of literature. He compiled and edited, in 1853, the "Autobiography of B. R. Haydon;" and, in 1859, the "Autobiography and Correspondence of the late C. R. Leslie, R. A." He also completed, in 1865, Leslie's unfinished work on "The Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds." He was one of the original staff of *Once a Week*, and he succeeded the lamented Shirley Brooks as editor of *Punch*. His labours as a journalist and a newspaper correspondent have been continuous, onerous, diversified and successful. Few literary men of our time have worked as faithfully and conscientiously, and none has better deserved the rewards of prosperity and honourable fame.

W. W.

II.—COSTUME FOR THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

The following passage, indicative of the style of dress proper to be used in the representation of this piece, is copied from Cæsar Vecellio's

book on Costume—“*Habiti Antichi e Moderni*,” Venice, 1598. refers to usages in apparel, in Italy, in the period of this play.

“The ladies wore a *balzo* [head-dress], of various colours, composed of a tissue of gold or of silk, and worked with a representation of flowers or with other designs. They also carried gold chains, girdles of gold, and fans, with highly ornamented holders. Their shoulders were covered with a sort of plaited collar, or neckerchief [*barero*], of linen or cambric. The gown was generally of damask, of a crimson or violet colour, having a lower border, six inches wide. The sleeves were slashed and puffed, permitting the chemise to show through. The cuffs, in which the arms of the chemise ended, accorded in style with the collar. The bodice, when worn, consisted of tissue of gold, and was unusually long. Sometimes the robe was made so long as to touch the ground.

“The men wore on their heads a *balzo* similar to that of the women, made of leather, and round like a diadem. Above this they placed a head-dress composed of a tissue of gold or silk. The shirt had a plaited bosom, and a low, ruffled collar. The waist of the coat was short, and the skirt reached to the knees; the sleeves were full, and extended to the elbow; the shirt-sleeves, which were provided with ruffled cuffs, covered the rest of the arm. The coat was ornamented with broad, colour bands, made of cloth of gold, or velvet, or other material. The shoes were of velvet.”

It is further stated by Vecellio that the garment now known as “arm-hole cloak” was sometimes worn over the attire first described. This was made of silk or velvet, and depended to the ankles. It was embellished with a broad, turn-over collar, sometimes made of fur, and with hanging sleeves, which might be worn over those of the coat or shirt. The breeches were slashed and puffed, and were fastened below the knee. The shoes were very broad at the toes.

Bertuccio should, of course, wear motley. The hood of the court jester was garnished with ass’s ears, and he commonly carried a bau-ti in his hand. Bertuccio’s position at the court of Manfredi is analogous to that of Touchstone at the court of Frederick, in “*As You Like It*.”

III.—THE ELEMENT OF DEFORMITY.

“A jealous, misanthropical, and irritable temper was his prominent characteristic. The sense of his deformity haunted him like a phantom, and the insults and scorn to which this exposed him had poisoned his heart with fierce and bitter feelings, which, from other points in

character, do not appear to have been more largely infused into his original temperament than that of his fellow-men. * * * The heart and the doors that are shut against every other earthly being shall open to thee and to thy sorrows. * * * Look at every book which we have read—those excepted of that abstract philosophy which finds no responsive voice in our natural feelings. Is not personal form, such as at least can be tolerated without horror and disgust, always represented as essential to our ideas of a friend, far more a lover? Is not such a misshapen monster as I am excluded by the very fiat of Nature from her fairest enjoyments? * * * The scoff of the rabble and the sneer of the yet more vulgar of his own rank were to him agony and breaking on the wheel. * * * It was as if the last cable at which the vessel rode had suddenly parted, and left her abandoned to all the wild fury of the tempest."

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S NOVEL OF "THE BLACK DWARF."

IV.—SUBSTANCE AND DRIFT OF THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

The terror that subdues the mind and the pity that melts the heart unite in elevating the moral and spiritual tone of humanity. They make mankind more virtuous and more humane; and therein they exert an influence which blesses the world. Both these forces are aroused and stimulated by the tragedy of "The Fool's Revenge." It is a gloomy piece, but it is full of power. It is adroitly constructed, vigourously written, and animated by a swift, exciting, propulsive, and indomitable movement toward a climax; and it tells a terrible story of good and evil passions. Its main motive is to rebuke the wickedness of human vengeance. Its literary and dramatic substance consists in the analysis of an exceptional phase of human nature. It depicts the love, the suffering, the rage, the hate, the frenzy, the mingling of angel and demon, and—finally—the awful fate of a man of austere mind and tender heart shut up in a deformed body, and burdened with a tremendous experience of cruelty and anguish.

The tragedy, in its English transformation, is free from all the grossness of Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'Amuse," upon which, remotely, it is based. Bertuccio, when first presented in it—as the Court Fool to Count Manfredi, the Lord of Faenza,—has suffered a pathetic bereavement. The poor creature remembers a happy home, wherein he was blessed with the love of an affectionate, faithful wife. That wife was torn from him, by a ruthless noble; and it is to avenge this outrage that Bertuccio now lives and labours. He has been crazed; but the cloud of lunacy has lifted, and the wreck of deformed manhood that now remains is

animated by one love, one hate, and one fearful purpose. The love is for his daughter; the hate is for his wronger; the purpose is revenge. The scheme that Bertuccio forms is to counsel his employer, Manfredi—a wicked, powerful, unscrupulous man—to abduct the wife of his arch-enemy, Count Malatesta. The first act of the drama shows the relations of these persons and the unfolding of this plot. The second act shows how, by a series of circumstances, strangely yet naturally contrived, the daughter of Bertuccio was substituted for the Countess Malatesta, and how the unfortunate Jester ignorantly became a party to the forcible carrying off of his own child. The third act depicts,—first his demoniac glee, in thinking over the consummation of his insane vengeance; then his paroxysms of anguish, consequent on the discovery of what has really chanced; and finally his rescue of his daughter, and his death.

Physical deformity has seldom been borne with patience. It reacts on the nature that it incloses. It saddens or it embitters. A deformed man is usually reticent and secretive. He shrinks from contact or observation. He suspects, on every hand, pity, contempt, aversion, or ridicule. He is morbidly sensitive. He withdraws his life from the obvious and sun-lit pathways of the world, and dwells in solitary and sequestered places; and there he nurses his emotions, whether of love or hate, till they acquire intense strength. If he be man of deep heart and proud mind, and if his nature be illumined by the light of genius, he will develop an amazing individuality. Pope and Byron come out of literary history as ready examples of this truth. These, of course, are exponents of an exceptional class; but, as the same human nature runs through all classes, the same general results are apparent in all the victims of deformity. The deformed man is placed at a disadvantage, and the cruel fact shapes and colours his whole experience. That experience, accordingly, attracts the analytical student of life, and stimulates the imaginative literary artist, by suggesting sharp dramatic contrasts. Sir Walter Scott has delineated phases of it with great vigour of treatment, and in a singularly beautiful atmosphere of romance, in his novel of "The Black Dwarf." Other authors have touched upon it, with more or less success; but no other great writer seems to have brooded over it so deeply as Victor Hugo has, for the purposes of art. To remind the reader of his Quasimodo, is at once to illustrate this meaning and to suggest a representative embodiment of this exceptional individuality. Bertuccio is, in some respects, a companion portrait; and certainly one of the most affecting images in all literature of the misery that laughs.

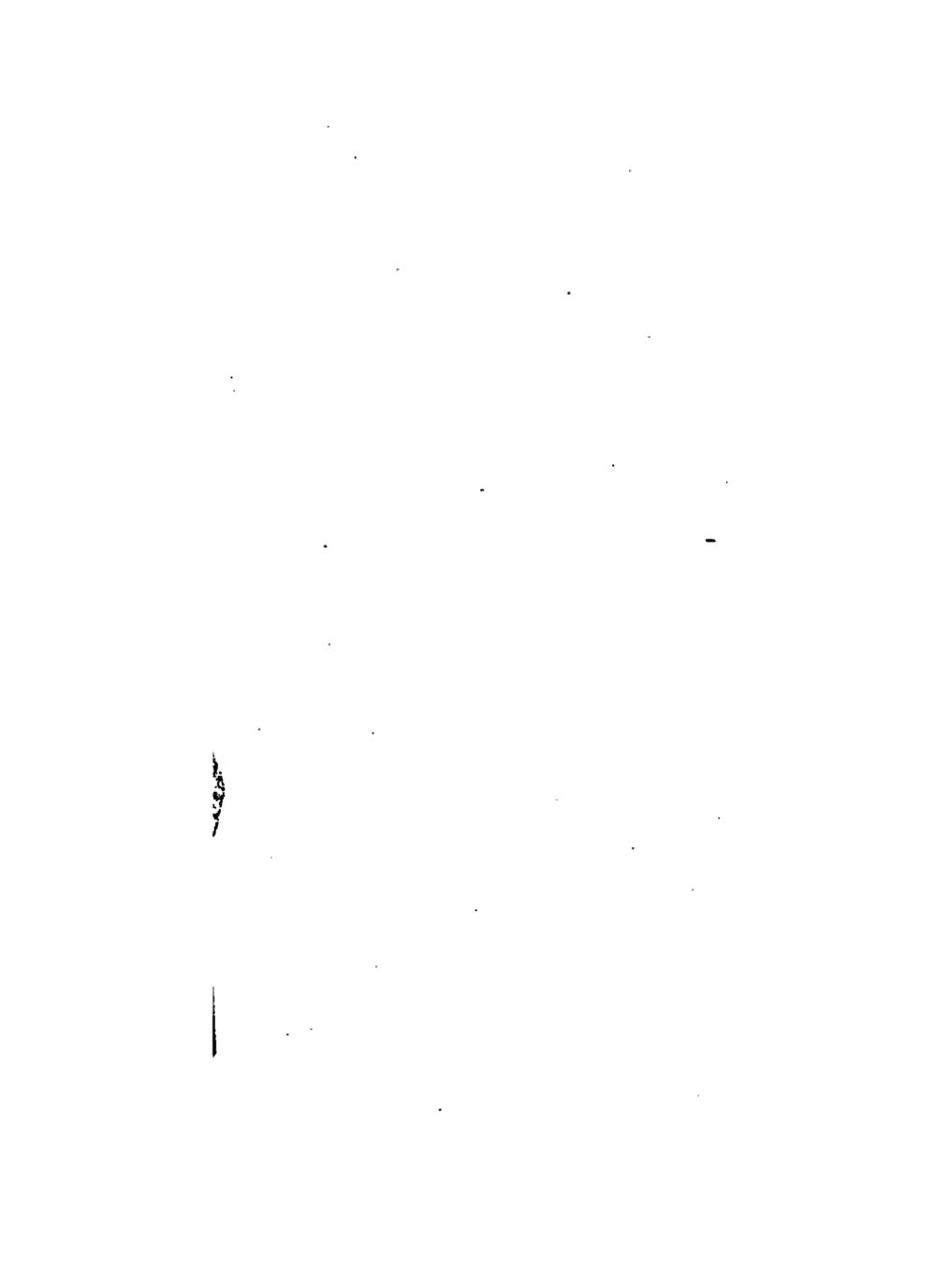
NEW-YORK, October 26th, 1878.

W. W.

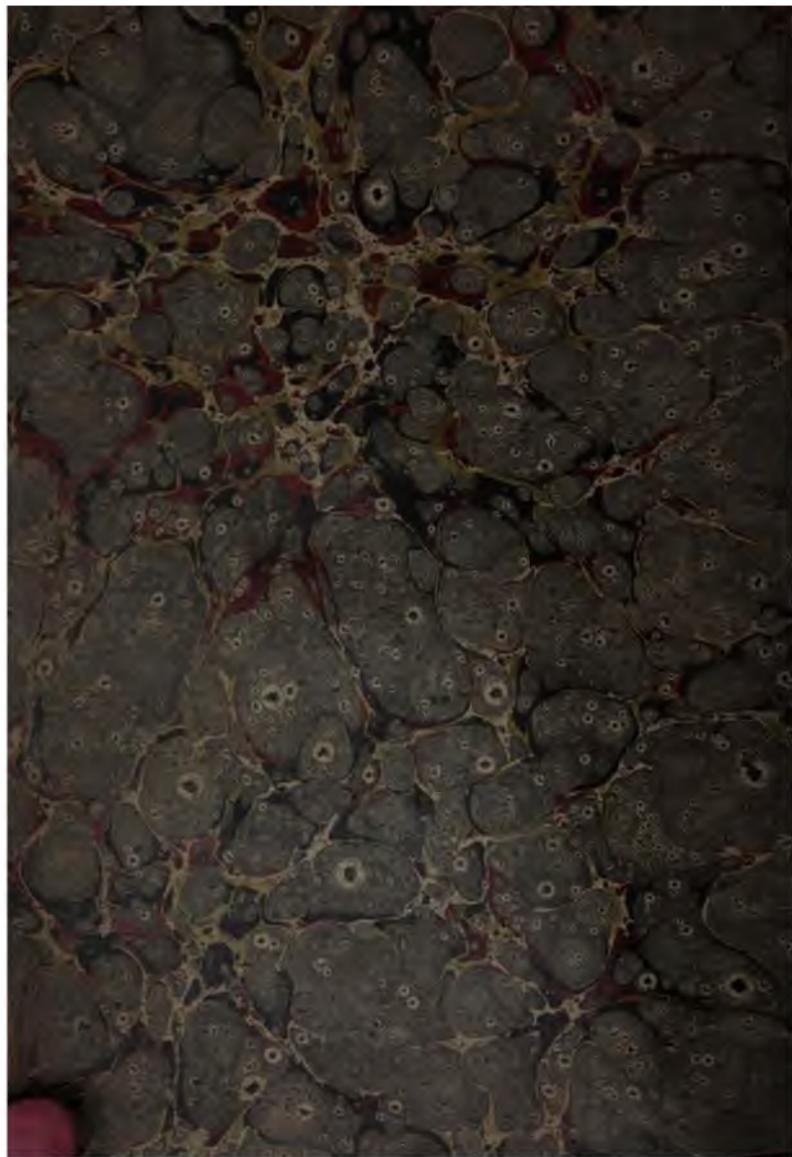












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